

DIVINE
MEDITATIONS

AND

HOLY CONTEMPLATIONS,

BY THAT REVEREND DIVINE

R. SIBBES, D. D. *K*

Master of Catharine Hall, Cambridge, and
Preacher of Grays Inn, London.

A NEW EDITION, again revised, and published at
the Request of several Eminent Divines.

Inscribed (by Permission) to the Right
Honourable the

COUNTESS of HUNTINGDON,

And Recommended by the Honourable and
Reverend Mr. WALTER SHIRLEY.

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TO THE
RECOMMENDATION
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
SELINA,
COUNTESS OF
HUNTINGDON,

This new Edition of so valuable a Work,
for which your Ladyship hath been
pleased to express such an high Esteem,
is most respectfully inscribed by

Your Ladyship's

Most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

Ant. Joseph Well-wisher, and

Servant in the Lord Jesus

WILLIAM MILLER.

THE RECOMMENDATION.

AS Divine Meditation has evidently a tendency to promote the most blessed ends, whatsoever will afford any useful suggestions, as helps to an exercise so essentially necessary, cannot but be greatly valued by all who do not wish to settle on the lees of a formal profession, but are earnestly pressing forward for the mark of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It is to these particularly, I recommend this precious little book, of which, if any thing can enhance the value, it is the extreme difficulty, till now, of procuring a copy. Numbers (I am persuaded) when they have read it, will be desirous to make it their constant pocket companion; and tho' the matter is weighty, yet the book in size and bulk is so light and portable, that it is very convenient upon this account. If therefore the Recommendation of so insignificant a person as I am, may induce any to possess themselves of so rich a treasure for so small a price, it will be a matter of satisfaction and joy to their

Affectionate Well-wisher, and

Servant in the Lord Jesus,

WALTER SHIRLEY.

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PERHAPS some readers may be pleased with the information that an eminent historian gives us concerning this great divine, therefore the following quotation I hope may be allowed.

He says of Dr. Sibbes, "He was one of the most celebrated preachers of his time." He was a divine of good learning, thoroughly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, a burning and shining light, and of a most humble charitable disposition. — His works discover him to have been of an evangelical heavenly spirit, the comforts of which he enjoyed at his death, which happened 1635, and in the 59th year of his age." Neal's Hist Purit. Oct. Vol. II. p. 280.

It may be necessary to inform the world, that the reasons for the re-publication of this favourite piece of the comforting Doctor Sibbes (as a celebrated divine used to call him) are these; the great and just esteem with which this, and all the Doctor's works have been always received by the religious part of mankind; the scarcity of this piece, only one or two copies, after diligent enquiry, having been found; and

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the pleasing prospect of so great and general utility, this little volume, under the divine blessing, happily promises to the world.

The Editor's copy appears to be a posthumous publication, printed 1638, with a very general, and tedious preface, under the signature of E. C. This old preface is therefore omitted.

That this, though posthumous, is the genuine work of the very eminent author, whose name it bears, cannot be doubted, after comparing it, with the Soul's Conflict. A few alterations and additions have been attempted, to render this work more acceptable and useful; but they relate almost entirely, if not wholly, to the mode of expression, and not to the sentiments of this venerable divine. And to this edition is added, an alphabetical table of contents, which was much needed in the two former.

All that are acquainted with Mr. Hervey's works, need not to be informed, how much the object of the present publication was in his heart, nor how frequently it was piously expressed.

And if the Editor is not much mistaken, Dr. Watts's words, concerning another, may be very justly applied to this book;
"I know none of more eminent necessity
"glory and usefulness, than these two,
"which

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“ which are the subjects of this little book.
“ I mean, the evangelical turn of thought,
“ and the experimental way of discourse
“ on practical subjects.”

But after the foregoing recommendation of an honourable and so very respectable a clergyman of the established church, I can add nothing to exhibit the very great merit of the following work.

There is another little piece in duodecimo, of an unknown, though not so ancient an author, (the running title, Practical Contemplations, consisting of one hundred Meditations on very interesting subjects; the title-page lost; in the alphabetical table of contents, A. Access, Believers have access with boldness unto God, Contemp. 51. K. Knowledge and practice to be joined, Contemp. 1.) which hath been very frequently enquired for, and particularly in both the Gentleman's and Gospel-Magazines, and many judicious persons wish it could be found, and likewise re-published.

However, that this attempt to rescue so valuable a work from oblivion, and render it more instrumental of spreading the favour of the Redeemer's name, and thereby become more extensively beneficial to mankind; the Divine Blessing is earnestly implored by every serious Reader's Friend and Servant,

WILLIAM MILLER.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE great encouragement already given to the re-publication of this valuable piece of practical Divinity is gratefully acknowledged, and in this edition further liberty hath been taken to alter some words, and add others, to elucidate the sentiments of this great Divine; whereby, it is hoped, the pious reader will receive increasing benefit.

August 14, 1775.



DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

1. **E**VERY man hath made good progress in religion, that hath an high esteem of the ordinances of God; and though, sometimes, he may find himself dull, yet the best things have left such a relish in his soul, that he cannot be long without them. Oh this is a true sign of a good temper of mind!

2. A woman, when she marries a husband, gives up her will to him: so doth every christian when he is married to Christ; he gives up his will, and all that he hath, and saith, Lord, I have nothing but if thou callest for it, thou shalt have it again.

3. When we come to be religious, we lose not our pleasure, but translate it; perhaps before we fed upon common or profane notions, now we live upon holy truths. A christian never knows what comfort is,
till

10 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

till he says, with Austin, " Lord, I have
" long wanted the true manna, all my for-
" mer food was nothing but empty husks."

4. God takes special care of weak christians, that are struggling with temptations and corruptions ; Christ carries them in his arms. All Christ's sheep are diseased, therefore he will shew a tender care of them; *I/a.* xl. 11.

5. Whatsoever is good for God's children, they shall have it ; for all is theirs to help them towards heaven ; therefore if poverty be good, they shall have it ; if disgrace, if crosses be good, they shall have them ; for all is ours, to promote our greatest prosperity.

6. God's children have these outward things with God himself, they are conduits to convey his favour ; and the same love that moved God to give us heaven and eternal happiness, also leads him to give us our daily bread.

7. The whole life of a christian should be nothing but praises to God ; we should neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, but eat, and sleep, and work, and talk, as doing all to God's glory and praise.

8. Though God deliver us not out of trouble, yet he delivers us from its evil ; from despair, by supporting our spirits : nay, he delivers by trouble, for he sanctifies

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 11

sies trials to cure the soul, and by little troubles he delivers us from those that are much greater and eternal.

9. What are we but a model of God's favours, what do we see, or taste, but the mercy of God; the miseries of others should be matter of praise, even the sins of others should make us praise God; and say, "Lord, such might have been my case, it might have befallen me."

10. God pities our weakness in all troubles and afflictions; he will not stay too long, lest we put forth our hands to evil; he will not suffer the rod of the wicked to rest upon the lot of the righteous, *Psal. cxxv. 3.*

11. Is it not an unreasonable speech for a man at midnight to say, "It will never be day?" It is as unreasonable for a man in trouble to say, "O Lord, I shall never get free, it will always be thus, and never end."

12. Do the wicked think to shame or intimidate good men? No, a Spirit of grace and glory shall rest upon them; they shall not only have a Spirit of grace rest upon them, but a Spirit of glory: so that their countenances shall shine as Stephen's did, *Acts vi. 15.*

13. If God hides his face, what shall become of our souls: we are like the poor flower that opens and shuts with the sun. If God shines upon the heart, it opens; but

12 DIVINE MEDITATIONS:

but if he withdraws himself, we hang down our heads: *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*, Psal. xxx. 7.

14. When we have given up ourselves to God; let us comfort our souls, that God is our God: when riches, and men, and our lives fail; yet God is ours; we are now God's Davids, and God's Pauls, and God's Abrahams, we have an everlasting being in him, (as one with Christ.)

15. A special cause of too much dejection, is want of resolution in good things; then we halt in religion; as halting is a deformed and troublesome gesture, so in religion, halting is always joined with trouble.

16. God hath made the poorest man, governor of himself; and hath set judgment to rule against passion, and conscience against sin; therefore reason should never be a slave to our passions.

17. It is the peculiar wisdom of a christian to pick arguments out of his worst condition, to make him thankful to God; and if thankful, he will be joyful, and so long as he is joyful, he cannot be miserable, but must be happy.

18. God hath, in Christ, made himself ours, it is no presumption then to challenge him to be our God; when once we have interest in God, he thinks nothing too good

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 13

good for us, he is not satisfied in giving us the blessings of this life, but he gives himself to be our portion for ever.

19. As we receive all from God, so we should lay all at his feet, and say, Shall I live in a course of sin? that will not stand with the favour of my God: he will not lodge in the heart that hath any purpose to transgress.

20. God's people have sweet intercourse with him even in their callings; when we look for comfort, we shall find it, either in ordinances, hearing, reading, or praying, &c. or else in our common employments.

21. We glorify God, when we exalt him in our souls above all creatures in the world; when we give him the highest place in our love, and our joy; when all our affections are set upon him as our greatest good. This is seen also by opposition, when we will not offend God for any creature; when we can ask our affections, *Whom have I in heaven, or on earth, but thee?*

22. True zeal for God's glory, is joined with true love to men: therefore let all that are violent, injurious, and insolent, never talk of glorifying God, so long as they despise the meanest of men.

23. If we do not find ourselves to be the people of God's delight, let us attend upon the means of salvation, and wait God's

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14 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

good time. Do not stand disputing, "Perhaps God hath not a purpose to save me;" but, zealous in obedience, cast thyself into the arms of Christ, and say, If I perish, I will perish here.

24. The love of God in Christ is not in word only; it is love that reaches from everlasting to everlasting, love shewn in choosing, and in glorifying us. In all the miseries of the world, one beam of this loving kindness of the Lord will scatter all, and fill my heart with joy.

25. Our desires are holy, if exercised about spiritual things. David desires not to be rich, or to have power to be revenged upon his enemies; but prays to dwell in the house of the Lord, and enjoy his ordinances there, *Psal. xxvii. 4.*

26. Desires shew the frame of the soul more than any thing. As a spring discovers itself by vapours that arise; so these rising desires shew that there is a spring of grace in our hearts.

27. Desires spring from the will, and the will being, as it were, the whole man, it moves all other powers to do their duty, and seek for the accomplishment of what is desired. Those therefore that pretend to good desires, yet neglect all means, and live scandalously; only have the desire of the slothful, that killeth him, *Prov. xxi. 25.*

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 15

28. An hypocrite will not pray always, but a child of God never gives over; because he sees an excellency, a necessity, and a possibility of obtaining what he desires; he hath a promise, *The Lord will fulfil the desires of them that fear him*, Psal. cxlv. 19.

29. Prayer exercises all the graces of the Spirit; we cannot truly pray, but faith is exercised, our love, our patience, which make us set a high price upon that we seek after, and to use it well.

30. God takes it unkindly if we weep too much for the loss of a wife, child, or friend, or for any crosses in the things of this life; for it is a sign we fetch not that comfort from him, which we should and may do: nay, though our weeping be for our sins, we must keep moderation; with one eye look upon our sins, and with the other, look to God's mercy in Christ; therefore if the best grief must be moderated, how much more should the other?

31. The religious affections of God's people are mixed: they mingle their joy with weeping, and their tears with joy; whereas a carnal man's are all simple, if he rejoices he is mad, if sorrowful (unless restrained) he sinks. Grace always tempers both the joy and sorrow of a christian; because he hath always something to rejoice in, and something for which to grieve. Oh then,

16 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

let me look to heaven for the fulness of joy.

32. We are members of two worlds; while we live here, we must use this world; how many things doth this poor body need? in our passage we must have necessities, but yet should use the world as if we used it not; for there is great danger, lest our affections cleave to things of this present life, and we forget heaven, our home.

33. It is a meanness of spirit in a christian to be over-joyful, or over-grieved for things worse than ourselves; if a man hath any grace, all the world is inferior to him, therefore what poorness of spirit is it to be over-joyful or over much grieved, when all things are fading, and vanish so soon away: Oh! let it therefore be continually on our minds, that all things here below, are subordinate to the upper world.

34. A sincere heart that is burdened with sin, desires not heaven, so much to leave pain, as because that is the place where he shall be free from sin, and have the image of God and Christ perfected in his soul; therefore a sincere spirit comes under the word, not so much because an eloquent man preacheth, as to hear divine truths; for the power of the Spirit goes with them to carry on his own work. You cannot still a child with any thing but the breast,

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 17

breast, so you cannot satisfy the desires of a christian, but with divine truths, as Isa. xxvi. 8. *The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.*

35. There are a thousand things that hinder good success in our affairs. What man can apply all things to a fit issue, and remove all that may hinder it? Who can observe persons, times, places, advantages, and disadvantages? and when we see these things, there is naturally a passion, hope or fear, that robs us of our knowledge; as when a man sees any danger, there is such a fear, or anger, that he is in a mist. So that unless God gives particular success, there is none. As it is in the frame of a man's body, that stands upon many joints, if any one be out of order, that hinders all the rest.

36. If we wish to persevere, as deep apprehension of our miseries by nature is necessary, let us labour to have our hearts broken more and more for sin. By this fault the stony ground-hearers, spoken of in the gospel, wanted fertility: therefore it is christian policy to suffer our souls to be humbled as deep as possible, that there may be mould enough; otherwise there may be great joys in hearing divine truths, but all will be sucked up like dew, under persecution, and the word become unfruitful.

48 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

37. What is the reason that God's children sink not to hell under their troubles ? Because they have God's inward presence strengthening them ; for the Holy Ghost helps our infirmities : and not only assists us to pray, but to bear crosses, by lightening them with some views of God's gracious countenance. Nothing can support our faith, but inward strength from God.

38. In prosperity, or after some deliverance, it is the fittest time for praise, because then our spirits are raised and cheered by the evidence of God's favour ; the greater the cross, from which we have been delivered, the more will our hearts be enlarged to praise the Lord.

39. When we receive any good, either for body or soul, whoever is the instrument, let us look to the principal ; as in the gifts we receive, we look not to him who brings, but to him who sent them.

40. Take heed of Satan's policy ; say not, God hath forgotten me, because I am in extremity ; nay, rather say, Surely God will soon show mercy, now is the special time of mercy. Let me always repel Satan with his own weapons.

41. Whatsoever God takes away from his children, he either supplies with a much greater favour, or else with strength to bear the loss. Hath God given charge to others,

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 19

to take care of the fatherless and widow, and will he neglect them himself?

42. That is spiritual knowledge, which alters the relish of the soul; for we must know there is a bitter opposition in our nature, against all saving truths; especially there is a contrariety between our nature, and that doctrine which teaches us, we must deny ourselves and be saved by another. The soul must first be brought to relish, before it can digest; there must be first an holy harmony between our nature and divine truth, revealed in the Gospel.

43. That we might walk right in God's ways, let us have heaven daily in our eye, and the day of judgment. So faith will steer the course of our lives, and breed love in the use of the means, and patience under all conditions; Oh! let us keep our eye, with Moses, upon him that is invisible.

44. A man may know that he loves the world if he be more careful to get than to use it: we are but stewards; and every one should consider, I must be as careful in distributing, as in getting riches; for when a person is all in getting, and nothing in distributing, this man is a worldling; though moderate in getting wealth without wrong to any man, the world hath gotten his heart, he makes not that use of it, he should.

45. It is as foolish a conceit to think,
that

20 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

that we can fit ourselves for grace ; as, that a child in the womb could forward its natural birth : if God hath made us men, let us not make ourselves gods ; it is God, &c. *Phil. ii. 13.*

46. As natural life preserves itself by repelling that which is contrary to it ; so where the life of grace is, there is a growing principle of desire, of skill, and of power, to subdue every sin.

47. It is in the nature of the soul, when it sees a succession of better things, this world seems mean ; when it sees another happy condition, not liable to change, it hath a sanctified judgment to esteem things as they are, and so by faith overcomes the world.

48. In the new covenant, God intends the glory of his grace above all. Now faith is fit for it, because it hath an uniting virtue to knit us to the Mediator, and to lay hold on a thing out of ourselves ; it empties the soul of all conceit of its own worth, and of the strength and excellence of every creature, and so gives all the glory of salvation to God thro' Jesus Christ.

49. What we are afraid to speak before men, and to do for fear of danger, let us much more be afraid to think before God ; therefore we should stifle all evil thoughts in the very conception, in their very rising ;

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 21

let them be used as rebels and traitors, be subdued at first.

50. The heart till a man becometh a believer, is in a wavering condition, never quiet; the happiness of the creature is to be satisfied, and have rest; for perplexity makes every one miserable. If a man has but a little scruple in his conscience, he is like a ship tossed by contrary winds and cannot get to the desired haven.

51. The righteousness of works leaves the soul in perplexity; that righteousness which comes by any other means than by Christ, leaves the soul unsettled; because the law of God promiseth life only upon absolute and personal performance. Now the heart of man tells him, these evils he hath done, and such and such duties omitted; and guilt breeds perplexity, because he hath no support.

52. Glory follows afflictions, not as the day follows night, but as the spring follows winter: winter prepares the earth for spring, so do afflictions, sanctified, prepare the soul for glory.

53. This life is not chiefly for the body but for the soul; and therefore the soul says to it, "If thou prevailest over me to fulfil thy desires, thou wilt lose me and thyself forever." But if the body be given up to Christ the soul will plead for it in heaven;
Lord,

22 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

“Lord, that body in yonder world, did fast for me, and pray with me!” it will plead (as Pharaoh’s butler for Joseph) to the King of Kings.

54. Afflictions make a divorce between the soul and sin : it is not a small thing that will work sin out of the soul, it must be the spirit of burning, the fire of afflictions sanctified ; heaven is for holiness, and all that is contrary to holiness, affliction works out, and so fits the soul for further and perfect communion with God.

55. When the soul admires spiritual things it is in an holy frame, and so long it will not stoop to carnal comforts. O let me labour to keep my heart in a state of holy admiration from day to day.

56. Unto all those whom Christ saves by his merit, he discovers their wretched condition, and a better to be obtained : he shews us by whom we are redeemed, and from what, and unto what condition, the Spirit informing us thoroughly, that God enters into covenant with us through Jesus Christ.

57. Spiritual duties are as opposite to flesh and blood, as fire to water ; but as ointment makes the members nimble and strong ; so where the Spirit of God is in any man, it makes him nimble and strong, and chearful to all good duties : but when

we are drawn to them as a bear to the stake, for fear or by natural custom ; this is not from the Spirit, for by the Spirit our duties are performed without force, or fear, or vain hope. A child needs no extrinſical motion to make him pleaſe his father, be-
 cauſe love is inbred and natural to him.

58. The weights of a clock move all the wheels, ſo artificial chriſtians are excited by things without them ; for they want an inward principle to do good freely ; but the Spirit of God works a kind of natural freedom.

59. As a woman under the law of Moſes, when forced by any man, if ſhe cried out was then blameleſs; ſo if we unfeignedly cry to Chriſt, and complain of our corruptions, as too ſtrong for us, this prayer will witneſs to our hearts, that we are not hypocrites.

60. Good duties come from ſound chriſtians as fire out of a flint ; but they flow from a child of God, as the waters of a ſpring : yet becauſe there is fleſh, as well as ſpirit, therefore every duty muſt be gotten (as it were) out of the fire. And yet alſo there is an holy liberty, becauſe there is a principle that reſiſts the fleſh.

61. God's children are hindered in all good duties by an inevitable weakneſs in nature, as the body after labour by drow-
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24 DIVINE MEDITATIONS

finess; therefore the Spirit may be willing when the flesh is weak. If we truly strive against this dulness, Christ is always ready to make excuse for us, as he did for his disciples, *Matt. xxvi. 41.*

62. A child of God is the greatest freeman, and the best servant, even as Christ himself was the best servant, yet none so free; and the greater portion any man hath of his Spirit, the freer disposition he hath for Christ's sake to serve every one in love.

63. Sight is the noblest sense, it is quick, We can look from earth to heaven in a moment; it is large, We can see the hemisphere of the heavens at one view; it is sure and certain; in hearing we may be deceived; and lastly, it is the most affecting sense; even so faith is the quickest, the largest, the most certain, the most affecting grace: like an eagle in the clouds, at one view it sees Christ in heaven, and looks down upon the world; it looks backwards and forwards, it sees things past, present, and to come; therefore this grace is said, *2 Cor. iv. 18.* to behold things unseen and eternal.

64. A vail had two uses amongst the Jews, one was subjection, and therefore the women were veiled; another was obscurity, and therefore the vail was put on Moses' face. Both these are now taken
away

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 25

away in Christ; for we serve God, as sons, a father; and as a spouse her husband; we are still in subjection, but it is not servile; and now also with open face, seeing the glory of the Lord, we behold the things themselves, as clearly laid open, the vail being taken away.

65. Our happiness consists in due subordination and conformity to Christ; therefore let us labour to carry ourselves as he did, to his Father, to his friends, to his enemies. In the days of his flesh, he prayed whole nights to his Father. How holy and heavenly minded! he took occasion from vines, and stones, and sheep, for heavenly discourse; and when he rose from the dead he spake only of things concerning the kingdom of God. As for his carriage towards his friends, *He would not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed*; he did not reproach Peter with his denial; but was of a winning disposition to all: and as for his carriage to his enemies, he did not call for fire from heaven to destroy them, but dropped many tears for those that shed his blood, *O Jerusalem, &c.* and upon the cross, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do*: so that to be like minded to Christ, consider how he carried himself to his Father, to his friends, to his enemies, yea to the devil himself. E-

26 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

ven when he comes to us in wife, children, friends, &c. we must as Christ did, say to Satan, get thee hence ; and when we deal with those that have the spirit of the devil in them, we must not render reproach for reproach, but answer them, *It is written.*

66. When we find any grace wrought in us, we should have an holy esteem of ourselves ; and say, when tempted to sin : What ! I that am an heir of heaven, a king, a conqueror, a son of God, shall I debase myself ? God has put a crown upon my soul, and shall I cast my crown in the mire ? no I will be more honourable. These are no proud thoughts, but suitable to our state.

67. Those that have eyes dazzled with the false lustre of the world, want spiritual light : Christ himself when here upon earth, lived a concealed life, only at certain times some beams of glory broke out. Let it comfort us that our glory is hid in Christ, though often clouded with the malice of wicked men, and with our own infirmities : but we are now and ever shall be glorious in the eyes of God and his holy angels.

68. As children often after sickness grow much ; so God's children grow, especially after their falls ; sometimes in humility, in patience and other graces. Herbs and trees, grow at the root in winter, in the
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 27

leaf in summer, and in the seed in autumn : so christians at different seasons grow in every grace.

69. That which we drew from the first Adam, was the displeasure of God but we draw from the second Adam the favour of God ; from the first Adam comes corruption, from the second, grace ; from the first Adam we derive all miseries, we draw from the second Adam, life and happiness ; whatsoever we had from the first Adam, it is repaired more abundantly in the second, our Lord Jesus Christ.

70. Grace makes us glorious, because it puts glory upon the soul ; carries it above all earthly things ; tramples the world under foot, and prevails against those corruptions that foil ordinary men. A man is not more above the beasts, than a christian is above other men, but it doth not yet appear what hereafter he shall be.

71. It is an evidence that we are partakers of God's grace, if we can look upon the lives of others much better than ours, and love and esteem them as glorious. A man may see grace in others with a malignant eye, for natural men are so vain-glorious, that when they see the lives of other men outshine theirs, instead of imitating they darken them ; that grace they will not imitate, they defame : therefore when persons

28 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

can see grace in others, and honour it in them, it is a sign they have grace themselves. Men can endure good in books, and hear good things of men that are dead, but they cannot endure it in the lives of others, to be in their eyes, especially when they come to compare themselves with them, they do not like to be out-shined.

72. As the sun goes his course, though we cannot see it move; and as plants and herbs grow, though we cannot perceive them to grow: even so it follows not that a christian grows not, because he cannot see himself to grow; nay, if believers decay in their first love, or in some other grace, yet another grace may thrive, as their humility, their tenderness of conscience: sometimes they seem not to grow in the branches when they grow at the root; after a check grace breaks out the more; as we say, after a hard winter there usually follows a glorious spring.

73. God's children never hate corruption more, than when they have been overcome: the best men living have corruptions which they see not till they break out by temptations. When these corruptions are discovered, it stirs up our hatred, and hatred stirs up endeavour, and endeavour revenge; so that God's children should not even be
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discouraged by their falls; but, looking to Jesus, run the race set before them.

74. When true grace is wrought in a christian, his desires go beyond his strength, and his prayers are answerable to his desires. So particularly young christians often call their state in question, because they cannot bring heaven down upon earth; and cannot be perfect; but God will have us depend upon him for gradual increase of grace, by daily faith and expectation.

75. Christ is our pattern, whom we must strive to imitate; it was necessary that our pattern should be exact, that we might see our imperfections and be humbled for them, and live by faith in Christ, for sanctification.

76. Consider Christ upon the cross, as a publick person; when he was crucified, and when he died for sin, he died for my sins. This knowledge of Christ will be a crucifying knowledge, this will stir up my heart to use my corruptions, as my sins did Christ; as he hated sin, it will work the same disposition in me, to hate this body of death, and to use it as that treated Christ: if we see this clearly, it will conform us to Christ.

77. With our contemplations, let us join this kind of reasoning; Hath God so hated pride, that Christ was humbled to the death

30 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

of the cross, to redeem me from it, and shall I be proud? When we are stirred up to revenge, let us consider, that Christ prayed for his enemies: when tempted to disobedience, think, God in my nature was obedient unto the death, and shall I rebel? and when we grow hard-hearted, consider, Christ became man, that he might shew bowels of mercy: let us reason thus, when we are tempted, and it will be a means to transform us into the likeness of Christ.

78. When God is blasphemed, or the like, let us think, how would Christ stand affected, if he were here? when he was here upon earth, how zealous was he against profaneness, and shall I be so cold? when he saw the multitude wander as sheep without a shepherd, his bowels yearned; and shall we see so many poor souls live in darkness, and our bowels not yearn over them?

79. We must look upon Christ, not only as a physician, but as a perfect pattern for imitation. Wherefore did he live so long upon earth, but to shew us an example? And let us remember that we shall be accountable for those good examples which we have from men; there is not an example of an humble, holy and industrious life, but shall be laid to our charge; for
 God

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 51

God doth purposely set them to shine before our eyes, that we might take their example, and be followers of the Lord.

80. As the spirits in the arteries quicken the blood in the veins, so the Spirit of God goes along with the word, and makes it effectual. St. Paul speaks to Lydia's ear, but the Spirit speaks to her heart. As it was with Christ himself, so it is with his members: He was conceived, anointed and sealed by the Spirit; he was led into the wilderness, he offered up himself, by the Spirit, and by the Spirit he was raised from the dead: even so the members of Christ answer unto Christ himself; all is by the Spirit, we are conceived by the Spirit; the same Spirit that sanctified him, sanctifies us: first we receive the Spirit by way of union, and then unction follows after; when we are united to Christ by the Spirit, then He works the same in us, as He did in Christ.

81. When a proud wit, and supernatural truths meet together, a man will have something of his own; therefore in reading and studying of heavenly truths, especially the gospel, we must pray to God for his Spirit, and not venture upon conceit of our own parts, for God will curse such proud presumption.

82. Many think that the knowledge of
divine

32 DIVINE MEDITATIONS

divine truths, will make them divine; whereas it is the Holy Ghost only that gives a taste and relish of them; for without the Spirit, their hearts will rise, when the Word comes to each of them in particular, and tells them, you must deny yourself, and venture even life for the truth.

83. When men understand the scriptures, and yet are proud and malicious; we must not take scandal at it; for their hearts were never subdued; they understand supernatural things by human reason alone; and not by divine light.

84. Those that measure lands, are very exact in every thing, but the poor man whose it is, knows the use of the ground better, and delights in it more; because it is his own; so it is with ministers, that can exactly speak of heavenly truths, yet have no share in them; but the poor soul that hears them, rejoyceth, and saith, these things are mine.

85. This life is a life of faith, for God will try the truth of our faith, that the world may see that God hath such servants as will depend upon his bare word; it were nothing to be a christian, if we should see all here; but God will have his children live by faith, and take the promises upon his word.

86. The nature of hope is to expect
that

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 33

that which faith believes, what could the joys of heaven avail us if it were not for hope? it is the anchor of the soul, and being fixed in heaven, it stills the soul in all the troubles, combustions and confusions we daily meet with in the present world.

87. It is too much curiosity to search into particulars; as, what shall be the glory of the soul? and what shall be the glory of the body? rather study to make a gracious use of them, and in humility say; Lord, what is sinful man, that thou should'st so advance him! The consideration of this glory should make us abase ourselves, and in humility even now give thanks in hope, as Peter did, *1 Pet. i. 3.* when he thought of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not, he gave thanks, *Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us, &c.*

88. When we see men grow proud with the things of this life, let us in an holy kind of state, think of our happiness in heaven, and carry ourselves accordingly. If we see any thing good in the world; let us say to our souls, this is not what I look for, or when we hear of any thing that is good, let us say, I can hear this, but desire the chief good; or when our knowledge increases of common things,
this

34 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

this is not what I long for ; but for things
that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor that
ever enter'd into the heart of man.

89. There are four things observable in the nature of love ; first, an estimation of the party beloved ; secondly, a desire to be joined to him ; thirdly, a settled contentment ; fourthly, a desire to please the party in all things ; so there is first in every christian an high estimation of God in Christ ; he makes choice of him above all things, and speaks largely in his commendation : secondly, he desires to be united to him, and where this desire is, there is an intercourse, he will open his mind to him by prayer, and go to him in all his consultations for counsel : thirdly, he places contentment in him alone, because in the worst condition he finds peace and comfort when the light of his countenance shines upon him : fourthly, he seeks to please him ; he labours so to act, that God may in Christ delight in him ; love stirs up his soul to remove all things distasteful to him ; he asks, as *David* did, *Is there never a one left of the house of Saul, to whom I may do good for Jonathan's sake ?* How can I honour my God ?

90. Infirmities in God's children preserve their grace, therefore it is that in scripture, where God honours the saints,
their

their weaknesses are made known: Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed, but he halted; Christ said to Peter, *Upon this rock will I build my church; yet get thee behind me satan.* Paul was exalted above measure with revelations; but he had the messenger of satan to buffet him; yet his prayer of faith prevailed.

91. It is the endeavour of an evil man to quench great good for a little ill; but Christ cherishes a little grace, though there be great corruption, though very offensive to him. Let me labour to gain to him all I can, by meekness and love.

92. Christians find their corruptions more offensive to them, than when they were in the state of nature; therefore it is, that they think their state is not good; but corruption boils more, because it is restrained.

93. The more of the will, the more heinous the sin; when we venture upon sinful courses deliberately, it exceedingly wastes our comfort: when we fall into sin against conscience, and abuse our christian liberty; God fetches us back by some severe affliction; there shall be a cloud between God's face and us; and he will suspend his comforts for a long time: let no man venture upon sin, for God will take a

course

36 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

course with him that shall be much to his sorrow.

94. The reason why some weak christians have more loving souls, than men of greater parts, is because great men have corruptions answerable to their parts; great gifts, great doubts; they are entangled with arguments, and study to inform their brains, when others are warm with pious affections. A poor christian cares not for cold disputes, instead of these he grows in divine love; which is the reason why such often go to heaven with great joy, whilst others are entangled and mourn under doubts and fears.

95. Many are troubled with cold affections, and then they think to raise love out of their own cold hearts; but we must beg of God the spirit of love; not wait to bring love to God, but fetch love from him, then shall we aspire towards God and heaven.

96. Love to things more base than ourselves; like a clear stream runs into a sink: as our love is the best thing we have, and none deserves it more than God; oh let him have our love, yea the strength of our love, that we may love him with all our souls, and with all our mind, and with all our strength.

97. As the sun, when gotten to it's height, scatters the clouds: so a christian is then in his excellency, when he can scatter

scatter doubts and fears, when in distress he can do as David did, comfort himself in the Lord his God, 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

98. Many would be in Canaan as soon as they are out of Egypt, they would be at the highest pitch presently; but God will lead us through the wilderness of temptations and afflictions, till we get to heaven; it is part of christian meekness to submit to God, and not to murmur, because we are not as we would be; let us rather magnify the mercies of God, that works in us any love to good things, and that he vouchsafes us the least first fruits of glory.

99. As noblemens children have tutors, so God's children have the Spirit; this you shall do, he says, and that you shall avoid. The Spirit not only renews our nature, but leads forward to perfect holiness. Wicked men have the Spirit knocking, and fain would enter, yet they will not hear; but God's children have him dwelling in them, and he is their constant guide to heavenly bliss.

100. A christian in his minority, is not fit to possess all that he hath a title to, but yet so much is allotted to him, as will conduct him through life, and to heaven: If therefore in want, he hath contentment, and in suffering he hath patience, &c. All things are his, as well what he wants, as

38 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

what he enjoys, for he is Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 23.

101. The word of God dwells in our hearts when it rules in the soul, when it directs our thoughts, affections, and conversation; so that we dare not do any thing contrary thereunto, but we shall be checked. Who shall erase what God's own finger hath written in our hearts? no fire nor faggot, no temptation whatever, for the promise secures eternal glory.

102. We shall never be satisfied to our comfort, that the scripture is the word of God, unless we know it from it self by its own light; and it shews itself abundantly to a believer to be so, in casting down the soul, and altering the mind and conversation. When the word is only in the head, if there come a temptation stronger than our faith, we despair: the word is far from those that can only discourse of it, who see it only as a natural truth, and look upon holy things, not in a divine but in a human manner, and by reason alone.

103. When the word dwells as a familiar in the heart, to direct, counsel and comfort us, it is a sign it abides there; the devil knows good and hates it, therefore knowledge alone is nothing, but if the promise alters the temper of the heart itself, then it is ingrafted there.

104. God

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 39

104. God excepts against none, if we do not except ourselves: therefore if thou, whoever thou art, man or woman, wilt come and take Christ upon his own terms, for thy Lord and Husband, for better for worse, with persecutions, afflictions, crosses, &c. So take Christ, and take him for ever, and thou shalt be saved.

105. When we believe divine truths by the Spirit, they work upon the heart, and draw the affections after them; if with the heart we believe the gospel, our souls will be, sooner or later, carried out to love and embrace Christ with great comfort and joy.

106. We may be brought very low, but shall not be confounded; we may be brought near to confusion, to shew us the vanity of creature-dependence; in the judgment of the world we may be confounded, but the hand of sovereign mercy shall raise us up again; and in the depth of our misery we shall not be ashamed.

107. The reason why God's children may often with great perplexity doubt of their salvation, is, because they have a principle of sin in them, as well as of grace: corruption will raise doubts, as rotten wood breeds worms; and as vermin out of putrefaction, so doubts and fears arise from remaining corruption: but holiness shall soon be perfect and our joy be full.

40 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

108. For want of watchfulness, God often gives us up for a time to such a perplexed estate, that we shall not know we have any grace; though we have a principle of grace, yet we shall not know it, but may even go out of the world in darkness and fear.

109. We ought not at any time to deny the truth, nor yet at all times to confess it; for good actions and graces are like princes that only appear abroad on some special occasions; and so if some circumstances in our confession be wanting, the design is frustrated. It is true of actions, as of words: A word spoken in season, is like apples of gold, in baskets of silver; therefore wisdom must be our guide in all our behaviour. Conversation is then only good, when it is better than silence, and spreads the knowledge of Christ.

110. It is not lawful for any weak christians to be present at the mass; Dinah ventured abroad and came crackt home. It is just in God, to leave those that dally with temptation to be caught, as many idle persons have often been, to their ruin.

111. He that will not now deny lawless desires, will not deny himself in matters of life, in time of trial. He that hath not learned mortification of the flesh in time of peace,

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 41

peace, will hardly be brought to it in time of trouble.

112. We must not only stand up for the truth, but in a holy manner, and not as proud persons do. Observe that rule in the first epistle of Peter ii. 15. and do it in meekness and fear. We must not bring passion into God's cause, nor must our lives give our tongues the lie.

113. There is such a distance between corrupt nature and grace, that we must have a great deal of preparation; and though there be nothing in our preparation, to bring the soul to have grace, yet it brings the soul to a nearer distance, than those that neglect the means of grace, and sin without restraint.

114. Nature cannot work above its own powers, as vapours cannot ascend higher than the sun draws them; our hearts are naturally shut, and God opens them by his Spirit, in the use of the appointed means: The children of Israel in the wilderness saw wonders upon wonders, yet when they came to be proved, they would not believe; Cry to God, "Help thou mine unbelief!"

115. God's free love hath cast our lot in these happy times of the gospel; and it is further love, that makes choice of some and leaves others. This should teach us sound humility; consider, that God must

42 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

open the heart, or else it will remain eternally shut, even against his grace.

116. As grace is not of our own getting, it should teach us patience and hope towards others, waiting, if God at any time will give them repentance; though God work not effectually the first time of conviction, nor the second; yet still wait, as the man that lay at the pool of Bethesda for the moving of the water.

117. He that attends to the word of God, doth not only know the words (which are but the shell) but he knows the things; he hath spiritual sight, to know what faith and repentance are; there is at that time a spiritual echo in the soul, as Psal. xxvii. 8. *When thou saidst, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, thy face Lord will I seek:* Therefore must men judge of their profiting by the word, not by carrying of it in their memories, but by being made able to bear crosses and to resist temptations, &c.

118. There should not be intimate familiarities, but where we judge men true christians, and towards those, whom upon good grounds we judge to be such, we must be gentle and easy to be entreated; we wrong them if we shew ourselves proud or unkind.

119. True faith works love, and then it works by love; when it hath wrought that holy

holy affection, it works by it; as when the tree is ingrafted and the scion takes, it soon grows, and shews itself in good fruits.

120. The word (from the mouth of God) is more ancient than the scripture; and the first promise of the scripture was this, *The seed of the woman should break the head of the serpent.* The scripture is but the modus, or the manner of conveying the word of God. This scripture is the rule whereby we must walk; and the judge also of all controversies of religion, and in spite of the church of Rome, it will judge them. S. Augustine hath an excellent remark; "when there is contention betwixt brethren, witnesses are brought; but in the end, the words, the will of the dead man is brought forth, and these words determine: Now shall the words of a dead man be of force, and shall not the word of Christ determine? therefore all ways look to the scriptures."

121. All idolaters shall be ashamed that worship images, or that trust to broken cisterns. Let those be ashamed that trust to their own wit and policy; all those shall be ashamed that exalt themselves upon any earthly things, for these crutches will soon be taken away, then shall they fall; false supports shall make them all ashamed.

122. The way to bring faith into the heart,

44 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

heart, is, first, there must be a judicious convincing knowledge of the vanity of all things within us and without us, that seem to yield support, and then the soul is carried, to lay hold on Christ; as David saith, *I have seen an end of all perfection.* Secondly, the soul must be convinced of an excellency in religion above all things in the world, or else it will not rest. The heart of man chuses the best, and only when persuaded that the gain in religion is above the world, then it yields. And thirdly, a due consideration of the firmness of the ground, whereupon the promise is built; humbly put God to it therefore, either to make his promise good, or to disappoint thee; and he will be sure to make it good, in forgiveness of sin, progress in grace, and strength in all temptations and times of trouble.

123. Man is naturally of such a spirit, that if he hath not, what he would, and when he would; he gives up hope. There is not a greater mark of the difference between a child of God, and one that wants faith, than to be hasty; such men, though they may be moral, yet are of this mind; they will labour to be sure of something here; they must have present pleasures and present profits; if God will save them in
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that way, well, if not, they will put all to the venture.

124. Many things hinder this grace of waiting, there is a great deal of tedious time, and many crosses we meet with, as the scorn of the world, and many other trials, and even God seems not to perform his promises; but let us comfort ourselves with this, he only waits to bless them that patiently continue in well-doing.

125. We should labour to agree mutually in love, for wherein any christian differs from another, it is but in little things; grace knows no difference, the worms know no difference, and the day of judgment knows no difference. In the worst things we are all alike base; and in the best, in Christ we are all alike happy; only in this world, God will have distinctions, for order sake, but else there is no difference.

126. Christians are like to men of great estates, but know not how to use them; we live not like ourselves; exercise strong faith, and you shall have much grace and comfort: we are scanty in our own bowels, therefore labour to have great faith, answerable to Christ's large riches: though christians be low enough in outward things, and often times poorer than other men yet they are rich, for Christ blesses them, under their crosses. What they want in this world,

46 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

world, shall be made up in grace now, and glory hereafter.

127. Every one ought daily to imitate Christ, do good to all, and as the apostle saith, *be abundant always in the works of the Lord*; let us labour for enlarged hearts, that we may do good seasonably, abundantly and unweariedly. Oh may the love of Christ give us the same impresson that was in him! He did good to all men.

128. None come to God without Christ, none come to Christ without faith, none come to faith without the means, none enjoy the means but where God hath sent them; therefore where there were no means of salvation before the coming of Christ, there was no visible intendment of God ordinarily to grant salvation. How great a blessing is the gospel!

129. Preventing mercy is the greatest. How many favours doth God prevent us with? we never asked for our being, nor for that tender love which our parents bore towards us in our tender years; we never asked for our baptism and ingrafting into Christ: What a motive therefore is this to stir us up, that when we come to years, we may plead with the Lord, and say, "thou wast concerned for me before I had a being, therefore much more wilt thou now have a gracious care of me, (whom thou hast,

hast reconciled to thy self) and remember me in mercy for time to come, and even throughout a blisful eternity.

130. If God's mercy might be overcome with our sins, we should overcome it every day; it must be rich mercy that can fully and for ever satisfy the soul; and therefore the apostle never speaks of it without the extensions of love, oh the height and depth! we want words, we want thoughts to conceive of it: Oh labour through grace to raise your souls to large and exalted conceptions and apprehensions of this mercy that is sovereign and divine!

131. God is rich in mercy, not only to our souls, but in providing all things we need; he keeps us from evil, and so he is called a Buckler; he gives us all good things, and so is called a Sun; he keeps us now in good condition, but will advance us still higher, even as our nature shall be capable, in the heavenly world.

132. The sun shines on the moon and stars, and they shine upon the earth; so doth God shine in his goodness and grace upon us; that we might shine in good works towards all men, especially unto them of the household of faith.

133. We are stiled in scripture good and righteous, because our understandings, our wills,

48 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

wills and affections are our own; but so far as they are holy, they are the Holy Ghost's. We are the principal in our actions, as they are actions; but the Holy Ghost is principal of the holiness of the action. The gracious government of the new creature is also from the Spirit; and if the Holy Ghost refuseth his government, doth not guide and assist us in every holy action, we must be at a stand, and cannot proceed. Oh! let us pray for the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit.

134. Every sinner is a god unto himself, not only in reflecting all upon himself, but in setting about divine things in his own strength; as if he were principal in his own actions, coming to them in the strength of his own reason: until God brings us out of carnal self, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

135. Those that care not for the Word, are strangers to the Spirit, and they that care not for the Spirit, never make a right use of the Word. The Word is nothing without the Spirit, and only animated and quickened by Him. The Spirit and the Word are like the veins and arteries in the body, that give life to the whole. And therefore where the Word is most revealed, there is most of the Spirit; but where Christ is not displayed in the gospel, the Spirit

Spirit is not at all visible, (in his saving power.)

136. When Christ comes into the soul by the Spirit, he carries himself familiarly; discovering the secrets of God the Father, and shewing what love there is in God towards us; he teaches us how to carry ourselves in all seeming neglects; and when we are at a loss, he opens a way for us, resolves our doubts, comforts us in our discouragements, and makes us go boldly to God in all our necessities.

137. As we may know who dwells in a house, by observing who goes in and comes out; so we may know that the Spirit dwells in us, by observing, what sanctified speeches he sends forth, what delight he hath wrought in us to things that are spiritual, and what price we set upon them. A carnal man lowers the price of spiritual things; because his soul cleaves to something he rejoices in far more; and this is the cause why he slightes the directions and comforts of the word: but those in whom the Spirit dwells, will consult it, and not regarding what flesh and blood dictate, will follow the directions of the word and Spirit of God.

138. A christian will not do even common things, before he sanctifies them: he dedicates himself, his person, and his ac-

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tions to God; and so sees God in all things. A carnal man looks to reason only in all that he doeth; but a christian sees God even in crosses to humble him, and every thing he makes spiritual; yet because there is a double principle in him, there will be some stirring of the flesh in all his actions, and sometimes evil will appear most. It is the excellency of a christian's state, that the Spirit will ere long cast out all sin; He will never let the heart and conscience rest, till it be forever banished from the soul.

139. The Spirit of God may be known to be in weak christians, as the soul is known to be in the body, by the pulses: even so the Spirit is discovered by groaning under sin, sighing, complaining, that it is so with them, and no better; so that they are out of love with themselves; this is an happy sign that the Spirit dwells in such Souls.

140. Where the Spirit dwells largely in any man, there is boldness in God's cause, a contempt of the world, *He can do all things through Christ that strengthens him*, his mind is content and settled; he can bear with the infirmities of others, and not be offended (for the weak in grace are soonest offended) and is ready to say, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* But if corruption bears

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 51

bears too much sway, then, *O stay a little that I may recover strength*; that is, stay a while that I may repent. The soul in such a frame not being fit to appear before God, but only when the Spirit imparts grace and divine consolations.

141. While young, carnal delights lead us; and when we are old, covetousness drowns us; so that if our knowledge be not spiritual, we shall not persevere to the end; and the reason why, at the hour of death, so many despair, is, because they had knowledge without the Spirit's saving grace.

142. God gives comfort in the exercise of grace, and the practice of duty; we must not therefore snatch comforts before we are fit for them; when we perform his precepts, God will bestow his comforts. If we will make it appear that we truly love God, we must keep his commandments, not one, but all; it must be universal obedience, from the heart as the spring, and flow from love.

143. It is a true rule in divinity, that God never takes away any comforts from his people, but he gives them better. When Elijah was taken from Elisha into heaven, God doubled his Spirit upon Elisha; if God take away wife or children, he gives us better blessings; the disciples

52 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

parted with Christ's bodily presence, but he sent them the Holy Ghost.

144. God will be known of us in those things wherein it is our comfort to know him : in all our devotions, the whole counsels of heaven comfort us jointly ; the second person prays to the Father, and he sends the third ; and as they have several titles, so they all agree in their love and care to comfort our souls.

145. In trouble we are prone to forget all we have heard and read, that makes for our comfort. What is the reason a man comes to think of what otherwise he should never have called to mind ? The Holy Ghost brings it to his remembrance ; he is a Comforter, brings to our minds useful things, and at such times, when we most need them.

146. Those that care not for the word of God, reject their comfort ; all comfort must be drawn out of the scriptures, which are the breasts of consolation : many by education know the truth, and are able to discourse well of it, but they want the Spirit of truth, and that is the reason, why all their knowledge vanisheth in time of temptation.

147. No man is a true divine but the child of God ; he only knows holy things by an holy light and life ; other men, tho' they

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 53

they speak of these things, yet practically know them not. Take the most mystical points in religion, as justification, adoption, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, the sweet benefit of communion of saints, the excellent state of a christian even in extremity ; inward fight and sorrow for sin : they know not what these things mean ; for how aptly soever they may discourse of them, yet the things themselves are mysteries ; repentance is a mystery ; joy in the Holy Ghost is a mystery ; no natural man, though he be never so great a scholar, knows these things experimentally ; he knows them only as physicians understand medicine, by their books, but not as a sick man, by his own experience.

148. It is a great scandal to religion, that men of great learning and parts are often wicked men ; hereupon the world comes to think that religion is nothing but an empty name. Without inward special illumination, they can never know spiritual things experimentally ; though they profess to believe these things, yet secretly in their hearts they make a scorn of conversion and mortification ; yea a preacher may speak of these things excellently and to admiration, and yet find not the power of them in his own soul.

54 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

149. It is good and comfortable to compare our condition with that of the men of the world; for however they may excell, in riches and learning, yet we have cause to bleſs God, as Chriſt ſaith in Matthew xi. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes.* It is good in all outward diſcouragements, thus to reaſon with ourſelves: "Wilt thou, my ſoul, change thy ſtate with the men of the world? God hath advanced thee to an higher order: let them rejoice in their greatneſs; alas, they are miſerable creatures, notwithſtanding all the abundance they enjoy!"

150. If we deſire the Spirit, we muſt wait in the way of duty; as the apoſtles waited many days before the Comforter came; we muſt alſo empty our ſouls of ſelf-love, and the love of the world; and willingly entertain thoſe croſſes that bring our ſouls out of love with it. The children of Iſrael in the wilderneſs had not the manna, till they had ſpent their onions and garlick; ſo this world muſt be out of requeſt with us, before we can be truly ſpiritual: through grace, labour to ſee the excellency of ſpiritual things, how deſpicable then muſt all the glory of the world appear! Theſe things, duly conſidered, will

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 55

will raise our desires more and more towards spiritual and heavenly objects.

151. The Holy Ghost would not come till Christ, by his death, had reconciled his Father, and after that, as an argument of full satisfaction, had risen again; because the Holy Ghost is the best gift of God, and whatsoever grace or comfort was received before, was by virtue of Christ's atonement; so that the mission of the Holy Ghost to the apostles and to us, is the best fruit of God's reconciliation.

152. If particular judgments come upon man, presently his conscience calls back sins long ago committed by him; and this waking accusing conscience shews, that we are all sinful creatures, and need the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all iniquity.

153. Every man by nature though the wisest, (till he is made free by Christ) is a slave to Satan, who abuses his wit and parts, and makes him work out his own damnation: this is not the condition of a few; but the greatest and wisest in the world, Satan leads to honors and voluptuousness; as a sheep is led by a green bough: alas, this crafty serpent goes with the stream of man's nature, and so is not discerned!

154. As when a man is called before a judgment-seat, being guilty of many crimes,

56 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

crimes, the judge offers him his book ; (benefit of clergy) as meaning to save him by this method, but he cannot read ; now he is condemned, partly for his former faults ; but especially because he cannot read, and therefore cannot have the benefit of the law : so is a wicked man, through his not believing in Christ ; because the remedy was prepared, but he refused it. In this sense (as some divines speak) no sin but infidelity condemns a man ; for if he could believe and repent, no sin should be prejudicial to his salvation. We had need therefore to look well to our faith, as unbelief seals a man up under sin : until he comes to Christ, conscience is his jailor ; his conscience, enlightened by the law, tells him, he is guilty of such and such sins ; and hereupon, as in safe custody, keeps him to the future and final judgment.

155. Though there is a destructive deceit in sin, naturally men will deny or diminish it, as Adam did ; and as Saul, when Samuel came to convince him, " I have," saith he, " done the commandment of the Lord ;" when driven from that, then, he " did but spare the cattle for sacrifice ;" but when nothing could satisfy ; then, " I pray thee honour me before the people." Things we cannot justify, yet we will excuse ;

cuse; unless God come by his Spirit, we are ready to shift them off, but when the Spirit comes and takes away all these fig-leaves, then he convinces each of his miserable condition; not only in general, but the Spirit working together with the word, brings him to confess, "I am the man."

156. The affection of grief follows upon the discovery of sin, by the ministry of the word; when the judgment is convinced, the affections are stirred up to hate sin; and where this is not, there is no true conviction; when a man cries for mercy, as for life, this is an argument of true repentance. He that is truly convinced, will be as glad of pardon, through Christ, as a malefactor at the place of execution.

157. It is the policy of the devil to make us slight the gracious work of conviction; for he knows that whatsoever is built upon a false foundation will come to nothing, and therefore he makes us slight the work of self-examination, but slight this and slight all; for if careless in examining thyself, thou wilt be partial in thy repentance and obedience.

158. Natural men labour to quiet all checks of conscience by sensuality; men are loath to know themselves to be as they are; they are of the devil's mind, they would

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58 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

would not be tormented before their time; such men when they are alone are afraid of themselves; as the elephant will not come near the waters, because he hath an ill shape; he would not see himself: so men by nature will not come under (the word) the light, lest they should see their deformities; nature is so foul by sin, that when a man sees himself, unless he be soon set in a better condition, it will drive him to despair.

159. We ought to have high conceptions of the grace and lordship of Christ, as lord over all our enemies, the fear of death, and the wrath of God, yea whatsoever is terrifying; for he hath freed us from the fear of evil, and given good hope through grace.

160. No sin is so great, but the satisfaction of Christ and God's mercies are greater beyond all comparison. Father's and mother's tenderest affections are but faint beams, and they lead us upwards to the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

161. The greatest spite of a carnal man, is, that he cannot go to heaven with his full swing in all sin, that he cannot enjoy his full liberty, and therefore he labours to avoid or suppress all the ordinances of God as much as he can.

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 59

162. The quintessence and spirit of the things we ask in prayer, are in God, as joy, and peace and contentment. Without these, what are all things in the world? and in the want of outward things, if we have God for our portion, we have all blessings, because the spirit of them all, is in him, and in him alone.

163. Prayer is a venting of our desires to God, from the sense of our wants; and he that is sensible of his wants is empty; a poor man, by the Spirit, earnestly pours out supplications in Christ's name, and wrestles with God in prayer.

164. It is not so easy a matter to pray, as men may think; in regard of the unspiritualness of our nature, compared with the duty itself, in which we draw near to a holy God; we cannot endure to be separated from our lusts; and there is great rebellion in our hearts against every thing that is good; and Satan also is our special enemy. When we go to God by prayer, the devil knows we go to fetch strength against him, and therefore he opposeth us all he can; but though some may mumble over a few prayers, yet (indeed) no man can pray as he ought, or in faith, that is not within the covenant of grace, nor without the Holy Ghost.

165. A child of God may pray and not be

60 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

be heard; because at that time he may be a child under displeasure: if any sin is not repented of, we are not fit to pray. Will a king regard the petition of a traitor, that purposeth to go on in his rebellion, or a father hear a disobedient child? Therefore when we come to God, we should renew our repentance, faith and purposes of better pleasing him; then remember the scripture, and search all the promises as part of our best riches; and humbly challenge God with his own promises. This will make us strong and faithful in prayer, when we know we shall not pray in vain.

166. When we pray, God often refuseth to give us comfort, because we have displeased him; therefore we should look back to our life past: perhaps God sees thee running in this or that sin, and before he will hear thee, thou must renew thy repentance for thy sin. Our nature is such, that it will knock at every door, and seek every corner before we come to God; as the woman in the gospel, she sold all, before she came to Christ. So that God will not hear, before we forsake all dependance upon the creature; and then he gets the greatest glory, and we have the greatest sweetness in our souls. That water which comes from the fountain is the sweetest; and so divine consolations are the sweetest, when

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 61

when we see nothing in the creature; and God is the best discerner of the fittest time, when to bestow upon us his own consolations.

167. When God means to bestow great blessings on his children, he will pour out upon them the spirit of prayer; and as all pray for every one, so every one prays for all; this is a great comfort to weak christians; when they cannot pray for themselves, the prayers of others shall prevail.

168. A fool's eye is in every corner, and his afflictions are seed scattered and soon lost. The only proper object of the soul is, That one thing needful, and this only will fill all the corners of it. When a man hath sucked out the pleasure of worldly contentments, they are then only dead things; but grace is ever fresh, and always yields fresh and full satisfaction.

169. Desires are the spiritual pulse of the soul, always beating, and shewing the temper of it; they are therefore the characters of a christian, and often discover more truly what he is, than even his actions do.

170. In the ark was the manna, which was a type of our sacraments, and the testament, which was a type of the word preached, and the rod of Aaron, a type of government; whereforever is spiritual man-

62 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

na, and the word preached, and the rod of Aaron in the government, there is a true church, though there be many corruptions.

171. The bitterest things in religion are sweet; there is a sweetness even in reproofs; when God meets with our corruptions, and declares such and such things to be dangerous; and that if we cherish them, they will lead us to hell. The word of God is sweet to a christian, that hath his heart under its influence; is not pardon sweet to a condemned man, and riches to a poor man, favour to a man in disgrace, and liberty sweet to a man in captivity? All that comes from God is sweet to a christian, that hath his heart touched with both a sense of sin, and of God's mercy in Christ.

172. It would not give happiness even to see Christ, but fight with interest and enjoyment. There are but two powers of the soul, understanding and will, when both these have their perfection, that is happiness; when the understanding sees, and the will draws the affections. These things united make up our everlasting happiness; the excellency of heavenly things, the sight of them, our interest therein, (and actual enjoyment.)

173. We see by experience that there is a succession of love; He that loves for
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 63

beauty will despise, when he sees more : so it is in the soul, respecting heavenly and earthly things ; when the soul sees more excellency, and a satisfying fulness in heavenly things ; then earthly things, like Dagon, immediately fall. St. Paul saith, *Phil. iii. 8. I count all things as dross and as dung in comparison of Christ.*

174. In prayer we tempt God, if we ask that which we labour not for ; our faithful endeavours must second our devotion ; for to ask maintenance, and not put our hands to the work, is only to knock at the door, and yet pull the door unto us that it might not open. If we pray for grace, and neglect the spring from whence it comes, how can we speed. It was a rule in antient times (lay thy hand to the plough and then pray :) No man should pray without ploughing, nor plough without prayer.

175. Wisdom is gotten by experience, in a variety of conditions ; he that is carried on in one condition, hath not wisdom to judge of another state, or how to carry himself to a christian in another condition ; because he was never abased himself, he is ready to despise and look above his distressed brother. That we may carry ourselves as christians, meekly, lovingly and tenderly to others ; God will lead us to

64 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

heaven in a variety of paths, and not in one uniform condition, as to any outward things.

176. There is no condition, but a christian picks good matter out of it: as a good artist sometimes makes a good piece of work out of bad materials. A gracious man is not dejected over-much with abasement, nor lifted up over-much with abundance; but by faith carries himself in an uniform manner, becoming a christian in all conditions: whereas those that have not been in Christ's school, nor trained up in a variety of conditions, learn nothing; if they abound, they are proud; if they be distressed, they murmur and despair; as if there were not a divine providence that ruled the world.

177. There is through sin, vanity, and misery in every thing under the sun; but when divine grace comes, it removes the curse, and takes out the sting of all evil, then we find good even in the worst things, and wait for complete salvation.

178. Christianity requires the greatest diligence: if we look up to God, what a multitude of things are required of a christian, to carry himself as he should; a spirit of faith, of love, of joy, and of delight in God above all: and if we look to men, there are duties for a christian to

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 65

his superiors, a spirit of subjection ; to equals he must shew a spirit of love ; and to inferiors, a spirit of pity and liberality : if we look to satan, we have a commandment to watch, and resist the tempter : if we look to the world, it is full of snares, there must be constant spiritual watchfulness, that we be not surprised : and if we look to ourselves, there are many duties required, to carry our vessels in honour, and to walk within the rules of the Holy Ghost, to preserve the peace of our consciences, and always to walk answerably to our dignity, as being the sons of God, and coheirs with Christ. The christian must dispense with himself in no sin, must be prepared for every good work, and must refrain from no service that God calls him unto. The life of a christian therefore continually abounds with honourable and profitable employment.

179. Sincerity is the perfection of christians. Let not satan therefore abuse us, we do all things, when we purpose and endeavour to do all things ; and are grieved when we cannot do better ; then, in some measure, we do perform all things, through Christ strengthening us.

180. A christian is able to do great things, but only by Christ, who strengthens him. The understanding, the affec-

66 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

tions and the will are ours ; but the sanctifying and the carrying out of these powers in a supernatural way, to perform duties spiritually, that is not ours, but it is Christ's ; and for his sake alone our best duties are acceptable to God.

181. We have not only the life of grace from Christ, at first, and receive from time to time spiritual power, whereby our faculties are more and more renewed, so that we are able to do something in our wills ; but we have the deed itself from Christ, for by his Spirit, he gives and then strengthens grace, for the performance of all his commands.

182. God preserves his own work by his Spirit : first, he graciously moves us to serve him, and then he preserves us in duty, and arms and animates us against all opposition.

183. Though Christ be an head of influence, from which all grace flows into every member ; yet he is a sovereign head, and gives it according to his own good pleasure, and the exigence of his members. Sometimes we need more grace, then it flows plentifully and supplies all our wants. Sometimes we need to know our own weakness ; then the Lord our strength and our guide leaves us to ourselves, that we may know, that without him we cannot stand, and

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 67

and know, the necessity of his guidance to heaven, in the sense of our imperfections, and of such corruptions, as before we thought were wholly subdued. Moses, by God's permission, was tempted to murmur, such a meek man; and David to cruelty, such a mild man: that thought they had not those corruptions so prevalent in their hearts.

184. God is forced to mortify our sins by afflictions, because we will not mortify them by the Spirit in the use of holy means. A gracious God gives us favours from his own tenderest love; but corrections are always forced, though very necessary for our souls good.

185. We may for the most part read the cause of any judgment, in the judgment itself: as, if it be shame, then the cause was pride; if it be want, then our sin was, that we did not learn how to abound, as we should, when we possessed God's mercies.

186. As we say of those that make bold with their bodies, to use them hardly, to rush upon dangers; in their youth they may bear it, but it will be owing them afterwards; they shall find it in their bones when they are old: so a man may say of those that make no conscience of running into all sins, these will be owing to them
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68 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

another day : they shall hear of their sins in time of sickness, or in the hour of death. Therefore oh take heed of sinning upon vain hope, that thou shalt wear it off, for one time or another thy guilt will find thee out, will stick by thee, and like an arrow pierce thy conscience.

187. When God visits with sickness we should think (in the use of means) our work is more in heaven with God, than with men, or medicine. When David dealt sincerely with God, and confessed his sins, God forgave them, and healed his body too, *Psal. ciii. 2.*

188. It were a thousand times better for many persons to be cast on a bed of sickness, and to be God's prisoners, than so scandalously to abuse the health they have continued so long.

189. It is an art wherein we should labour to be expert, to consider God's grace and love in the midst of his corrections ; that in the midst of them, we might have thankful, and chearful, and fruitful hearts : which we shall not have, unless we find some matter of thankfulness and praise. Consider therefore, doth God make me weak ? he might have struck me with death ; or if not, yet he might have awfully, and long ago, given me up to spiritual death,

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 69

death, to an hard heart, and to endless despair.

190. In this latter age of the world, God doth not use the same method of dispensation as of old: he doth not always outwardly visit for sin; for his government hath now, special reference to the souls of men. Therefore we should take the more diligent heed in worldly prosperity; for an offended God may give us up to spiritual blindness, and awful security; which are the greatest judgments that can befall us, and forebode endless wrath.

191. We should judge ourselves before God, for those things that the world cannot know, for spiritual sins: as the motions of pride, of worldliness, of revenge, of security, unthankfulness, and such like unkindness towards God; and in general, our barrenness in all good duties, that we owe to God and men. Such sins the world cannot see; yet these should humble our hearts; for when we do not make conscience of spiritual sins, God may soon give us up to some open abominations, that stain and publickly disgrace our holy profession.

192. Many oppose the power of divine grace, and rest in common, civil, and mere outward, performances. But if we will not duly regard the manner, God regards

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70 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

not the matter of the service we do ; therefore often he punishes professors for their ill performance of good duties ; as we see in 1 Cor. xi. 30, 31.

193. Our whole life, under the gospel, should be nothing but thankfulness, and fruitfulness. But oh ! take heed of turning the grace of God into wantonness. The honor, grace and authority of the gospel, all require, *that we should deny all ungodliness, and worldly lust, and live righteously and soberly and godly in this present world, &c.* When tempted to act otherwise, instantly we should think : Oh this is not the life of a christian under the gospel ! the gospel requires a more fruitful, a more zealous carriage, more love to Christ, &c.

194. If any man be so uncivil, when a friend shews him a spot on his garment, that he grows angry ; do we not judge him an unreasonable man ? so when told, this will hinder your comfort another day ; if men were not spiritually stupid and proud, would they swell and be angry with such a friend ? let us thankfully take the benefit of the judgment of other men. This was David's disposition, when told of his danger from present temptation, as he was marching to slay Nabal and his household. So we should bless God,
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 71

and bless our friends, that labour by their good counsel and advice, to hinder us from every sinful course.

195. Those that gird up the loins of their minds, and are guided in all their ways by God's word, are the only sound christians; and they are the only comfortable christians, that can, through grace, think of all conditions with comfort, always looking unto Jesus

196. It is an ill time to get, when we should use grace; therefore that we may have less to do, when it is enough to struggle with sickness, nay, at last have nothing else to do, but to die, and comfortably yield up our souls to God. Oh! through grace let us be daily exact in our accounts; every day exercise repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

197. God takes a safe course with his children, that they may not be condemned with the world: he permits the world to condemn them, that they may not love the world; the world hates them, that they may not love the world; that they may be crucified to it, the world must be crucified to them. Therefore they meet with such crosses, and abuses, and wrongs in the world. Because he will not suffer them to perish with the world: he sends them many afflictions in and by, the world.

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198. If God did not exercise us with seasonable corrections: we should often shame religion, and greatly dishonor Christ. God in preventing mercy chastens us often with fatherly correction.

199. In the troubles of our christian life we are carried naturally to second causes; whereas they are all but as rods in God's hand: look therefore to the hand that smites, look to God in all; he chastiseth us. Say as David in the matter of Shimei; and as Job saith, *It is the Lord that gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*

200. We have often occasion to bless God more for crosses than for our comforts; there is a blessing hidden in the worst things to God's children; as there is a cross in the best, to the wicked: to the saints there is a blessing in death, in sickness, in the hatred of enemies, a blessing in all our sorrows. In our afflictions we should not only justify God, but glorify him for his mercies; because rather than we should be condemned with the world; he will graciously take this course, that we might be partakers of his holiness, and so become more and more meet for glory.

201. Though our salvation be sure, yet the knowledge of this, doth not make us secure; though God will not banish us with

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 73

with sinners, yet for our sins he will sharply correct us here. By a careful sober life, we might obtain, from his mercy in Christ, many blessings, and find our pilgrimage much more comfortable: therefore it argues neither grace nor wit, that because God will save me, I will take any sinful liberties; no, though God will save thee, yet thou shalt endure such sharp anguish, that sin shall become far more bitter, than the sweetest fruit of it was ever pleasant.

202. Gracious persons in times of peace often undervalue themselves, and the graces of God in them; thinking that they want faith, patience and love; who yet, when God calleth them out to suffer crosses, eminently by his grace shine forth in the eyes of others, in the example of a meek and quiet subjection to the will of God.

203. God often maketh wicked men friends to his children, without changing their disposition, by only putting into their hearts some kind thoughts for the time; which incline them to shew favour; Nehemiah ii. 8; God put it into the king's heart to favour his people: so, Gen. xxxiii. 4. Esau was not changed, only God for the time, turned his affections to favour Jacob: so God stirs up the hearts of many, who still remain notoriously wicked, signally to favour the best, the holiest persons.

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74 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

204. Usually in what measure, in time of peace and liberty, we do inordinately let loose our affections; in that same measure are we soon cast down, or the more deeply distressed: when our adulterous hearts cleave to things earthly or sinful, the cross becomes more heavy, and our pain more sharp and extreme.

205. In spiritual conflicts a man is never overcome till his conscience be crackt; if conscience be good, and his cause right, he doth conquer, and shall be made more than a conqueror, in Christ's strength.

206. Partial and temporary obedience, is not obedience; in easy things, that do not oppose our lusts, which are not against our reputation, some will do more for a time than they need; but our obedience must be impartial, universal and constant, because God commands it to be so.

207. From every evil work to which we are tempted, we always need delivering grace; as to every good work, God's assisting grace: (by grace we are saved, and it is the gift of God.)

208. That christian who is conscious of good intentions to abstain from all evil, may presume that God will assist him, against temptations for the time to come, and render him victorious.

209. We should watch daily, continue instant.

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instant in prayer; strengthen our supplications with arguments from God's word and promises; and mark how our prayers speed. When we shoot an arrow, we look to its fall; when we send a ship to sea, we look for its return; and when we sow, we look for an harvest. When we have sowed our prayers, through Christ, in God's bosom, shall we not wait for an harvest, not look for an answer to our cries, not observe how we speed? It is atheism to pray, and not to wait in hope. A sincere christian will pray, wait, strengthen his heart with the promises, and never leave praying and looking up, till God gives him a gracious answer.

210. A circumspect christian, whatsoever he doth, will do it in fear; he calls God, Father, with filial fear; and eats and drinks with a cautious fear. St. Jude speaks of them that eat without fear: but the true servant of God hath an holy fear accompanying him in all his actions, in his words, and even in his recreations, in his meat and drink, and throughout his life. He that hath not this fear, how bold in wicked courses, and loose in all his conduct? But mark a true christian, and you shall always see in him, some happy expressions of holy fear.

211. The relation of a servant is of great

76 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

consequence, to put us in mind of our own duty. If we will be God's servants, we must make such a profession good, by our obedience; we must resolve, thro' grace, to come wholly under his government, obey all his commands, or else he will say to us, as to them in Judges x. 14. *Go to the gods whom you have served.* Empty relations are nothing; if we profess to be God's servants, and do not honour him by obedience, we take but an empty title. Oh let us seek for grace to make our professed relation good, at least in our affections and endeavours, that we may say, even to our God, *I desire to fear thy name: yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early,* Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.

212. In reading the scriptures, compare experience with divine declarations. As Neh. i. 8, 9. *If you sin you shall be scattered, and if you return again I will be merciful.* We should often and particularly practise this in the course of our lives; to see how God hath made good his threatenings in our corrections, and his promises in our comforts.

213. Those that have had sweet communion with God, but lost it, count every day a thousand, till they have recovered it again. When Christ leaves his spouse, he forsakes her not altogether, but leaves some-

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Something in the heart that makes her long for his return. He absents himself, only that he may enlarge and raise the desires of the soul; and when the soul hath found him again, it will not let him go. He comes, and he leaves us, for our good; we should judge rightly of our state, and not think we are forsaken of God, when we are under desertion.

214. If men can find no comfort, and yet set themselves to teach and encourage weaker christians; by way of reflection, they receive frequently great comfort themselves. So doth God reward this duty of mutual discourse; that those things we did not so fully understand before, by discourse we come to know and relish far better. This should teach us to love, and often engage in holy conference; for besides the good we do to others, we shall be profited ourselves.

215. We may use God's creatures, without scruple or superstition, but yet must not use them as we list. There is a difference between our right, and the use of that right; the magistrate may restrain the use of our right, and so may our weak brother, in case of scandal: so that, tho' all things be ours, yet in the use of them we must be sober, not eating or drinking immoderately, nor using any thing uncharitably,

78 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

ritably, whereby others may take offence : for though we have a right to God's bounty, yet our right, and the exercise of it, always must be sanctified, by the word of God and prayer.

216. Many lament, Oh that I had assurance of my salvation ! Oh that I were a child of God ! Why (man) in faith be zealous in obedience. But I cannot, the Spirit must enable me. Yet come to holy exercises, God often gives the Spirit ; therefore attend upon the means, till you find strength to obey. Wait upon God's ordinances till he shall enliven thy soul. All you that love your souls, attend upon the means of grace, and with special care always to sanctify the Lord's day : John was *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, Rev. i. 10.

217. God takes nothing from his children, but instead thereof he gives them what is better. Happy is self-denial that is more than balanced by joy in God. Happy is poverty that abounds with grace and comfort. Let us not fear what God shall call us to bear or suffer. It is hard, nay impossible to persuade flesh and blood to banish fear ; but they still hope in God that find these things by experience. Christians do find, even with their crosses, particular comforts, flowing from the presence
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of Christ's Spirit. St. Paul would not have escaped the greatest sufferings, to have missed such abounding consolations.

218. Christ chiefly manifests himself in times of affliction, because then the soul unites itself most closely by faith to Christ. The soul, in time of prosperity, scatters its affections, and loseth itself in the creature; but there is an uniting power in sanctified afflictions, by which a believer, (as in rain a hen collects her brood) gathers his best affections unto his Father and his God.

219. Christ took our nature, suffered hunger, and was subject to all sinless infirmities; when we are put to difficulties in our calling, to trouble for a good conscience, or to any hardship, we must labour for contentment; because we are not easily made conformable unto Christ: we must suffer, then *reign with him*, Rom. viii. 18.

220. There is not any thing, or any condition that befalls a christian, but there is a general rule in the scripture for it: and this rule is quickened by example, for our direction and encouragement. God not only writes his law in naked commandments, but enlivens them with the practice of some one or other of his servants. Who can read David's Psalms, but he

shall

80 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

shall read himself in them? He cannot be in any trouble, but David was in the same, &c.

221. As children in the womb have eyes and ears, not for that place, but for civil life, wherein they shall use all their members: even so our life here is not for this world only, but for another; we have large capacities, memories, affections and expectations; God doth not give us such powers for this world only, but for heaven.

222. In a christian that hath studied mortification, you shall even see the life of Jesus, in his sickness, in a great deal of patience and heavenly-mindedness. When his condition is much above his own power, faith in Christ derives strength, far above his condition.

223. As men cherish young plants at first, and fence them with hedges; but when grown, they remove them, and leave the trees to the wind and storms; so God sustains his children at first with inward comforts; but afterwards they are exposed to storms and winds, because better able to bear them. Let no man think himself the better, because he is more free from trouble than others; God sees him not fit to bear greater.

224. When we read the scripture, faith should take something for ourselves; as
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 81

when we read any promise, this is mine; and find any privilege, this is mine, it was written for me; as the apostle saith, *Whatsoever was written oforetime, was written for our learning, &c.* Rom. xv. 4

225. As the Spirit is necessary to work faith at first, so to every act of faith; for faith cannot act upon occasion, but by the Spirit; and therefore we should not attempt to do, or to suffer any thing rashly; but beg the Spirit of God, and hope for his assistance; because, according to the increase of trouble, must our faith grow. The life of a christian commences by the Spirit's working faith at first, but is promoted upon all occasions by his animating our graces already received. Faith stirs up all others, and holds every grace to the word; and so long as faith continues active, all other graces are lively too.

226. There is no true christian, but hath a public spirit, to seek the good of others; because as soon as he is a christian he labours for self-denial. He knows he must give up himself, and all to God, so that his spirit is enlarged in an increasing measure towards God, and the church. The greater portion a man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more he glorifies God, and promotes the good of all mankind.

227. If

82 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

227. If we would have hearts always disposed to praise the Lord, we must see every thing as received from God; to be of grace, and abundance of grace; whatsoever we have more than nature yields, is abundant grace; from Jesus, we have all as christians, though we may be poor and distressed, in our passage to heaven.

228. There are three main parts of salvation; first, a true knowledge of our misery; and secondly, knowledge of our deliverance; and then a life conformable to the word. These the Holy Ghost can only work, he only convinceth of sin, and where he truly convinceth of sin, there also of righteousness, and then of judgment, and leads us by faith and holiness to heaven.

229. That we may be convinced of sin, the Spirit gives a clear and commanding demonstration of our condition by nature, and answers all cavils. When we see the sun shine, we know it is day; so the Spirit not only convinceth us in general, that we are all sinners; but in particular, and with power, *Thou art the Man*. This conviction is also universal, of sins of nature, of sins of life; sins of the understanding, of the will, and of the affections; of the misery of sin, of the danger of sin, of the folly and madness of sin; of sins against

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gainst so many motives, so many favours. Proud nature intrenches itself with excuses, ready translations to others, and many mitigations of guilt. It is necessary therefore, that the Holy Ghost should join with men's consciences to make every one confess, *I am the man.*

230. Conviction from the Spirit may be known from common conviction of conscience, by this, that what is only natural is weak, like a little spark, and points out only gross sins, and chiefly those against the second table, and not against the first, especially not our sins against the gospel. Again, common conviction is against a man's will, and it makes him not the better man; though tortured by it, he runs from Christ; but a man that is convinced by the Spirit, joins with the Spirit against himself, accuseth himself, and is willing to have even his heart-evils laid open, that he may seek and find the riches of mercy through Christ.

231. It is not enough to know by the word, that there is strength and righteousness in Christ; but the Spirit must open the eyes of the soul, else we shall only have a natural knowledge of supernatural things. It is necessary to have a supernatural sight, so to see supernatural things, as to change the soul; therefore the Spirit
only

84 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

only can work faith to see, Christ is mine. Further, only the Spirit can lead the conscience to rest, because he is greater than conscience, and can answer all the cavils of flesh and blood; unless the Holy Ghost doth effectually apply what Christ hath done, the conscience will not be satisfied.

232. The best christians would be in darkness, and call their state in question, if the Holy Ghost did not convince them, and answer all cavils for them; we must not only be convinced at first by the Spirit, but throughout our christian course. This should make us come to God's ordinances with these holy aspirations; "Lord vouchsafe the spirit of revelation, take the scales from mine eyes, that as these are thy truths, so they may be profitable to me; do thou graciously incline my soul, that in faith I may cast myself more entirely upon thine infinite mercy in Christ Jesus!"

233. Spiritual conviction is not total in this life, but always leaves in the heart some dregs of doubting, though the soul be safe. As a ship that rides at anchor is tossed, though the anchor holds it; so the soul, that is somewhat convinced of its good state, may be tossed with many doubts and fears, but the anchor is in heaven;

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 85

heaven, and secures its everlasting salvation.

234. The Spirit of God doth so far convince every christian of the righteousness of Christ, as to preserve in him such power of grace as to cast himself upon the mercy of God. God will send his Spirit into the heart, and it shall not despair; he will send such beams of light and grace into the soul, as all the powers of hell shall never exclude.

235. When we neglect prayer; and engage in other duties in our own strength; if we belong to God we shall be sure to miscarry, though another man perhaps may seem to prosper. Oh! let us all be continually dependent upon God for his direction, assistance and blessing in whatsoever we engage.

236. As some women, because they will not endure the pain of child-birth, kill their children in the womb; so many, who will not be troubled with holy duties, stifle holy motions: Oh take heed of rejecting the motions of the Holy Spirit! entertain them with thankfulness; that when devout affections are kindled, they may turn to resolutions, and resolutions proceed to all holy obedience.

237. It is commonly found that we cannot converse with company, that are not

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86 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

spiritual, but, if they vex us not, they will taint us, unless we be put upon them in our callings. Oh! make special choice of your company, and walk in continual watchfulness.

238. It is rebellion against God to commit self-murder; the very heathens could say, "We must not leave our station till we be called." It is the voice of Satan, *Cast thyself down*. But what saith Paul to the Jailer, *Do thyself no harm, for we are all here*. We should so carry ourselves, that we may be content to stay here, till God hath done his work in us and by us; and then he will graciously call us hence in the very best time.

239. He is a valiant man that can command himself, in the way of duty, to suffer affliction. He that cannot endure some disgrace in the world, shews great weakness. Christ hath set us an example, for he could have come down from the cross; but he shewed his power most, by enduring reproaches and torments, even unto death.

240. The reason why many christians stagger, and are so full of doubts, is, because they are idle, and labour not diligently to grow in grace. Oh! let us earnestly strive after increasing knowledge and

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 87

mortification, for hereby, through grace, we shall rise to assurance.

241. Whatsoever is good in a natural man is depraved by a self-end; self-love rules all his actions, he keeps within himself, makes his chief end himself, is a god to himself, and God is but his idol. This is true of all natural men in the world, they make themselves their great end; and when the end is depraved, the whole course must be wrong.

142. The sense of assured hope cannot be maintained without great diligence and watchfulness, *2 Pet. i. 10. Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*; intimating that certainty will not be gained nor preserved without it. It is only the diligent and watchful christian that hath this assurance. The Holy Ghost will suffer us to be in a mist, and continue under a cloud, if we stir not up the graces of the Spirit; it is grace in exercise, that is an earnest, and so faith and hope in exercise are earnest of glory. If grace sleeps, you may have it, and not know it: Oh! then labour, by the Spirit, to keep your graces always in lively exercise.

243. Those that have assurance of their salvation, have oftentimes troublesome distractions, because they do not always stand on their guard: sometimes are lifted up

88 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

to heaven, and sometimes cast down even to hell ; yet always at the worst, something in the soul, suggests that it is not utterly cast off, by a merciful Redeemer.

244. He to whom this pilgrimage is pleasant, loves not heaven as he should ; the pleasures of this life are so suitable to nature, that we should sit down by them, if God did not follow us with several crosses : Oh ! let us readily submit to every cross ; because it is out of special love that we are exercised, lest we should surfeit upon earthly things.

245. In melancholy distempers, especially when there is guilt on the soul, we can find no comfort in wife, children, friends, estate, &c. It is a pitiful state, when body, soul, and conscience, all are distempered ; but even now let a christian look to God's nature and promises ; though he cannot live by sight, yet let him live much by faith.

246. Though God may personate an enemy, yet faith sees a father's love, and apprehends some beams of comfort. Tho' there be no sense and feeling ; yet the Spirit quickens faith, whereby the soul is able to cleave to God, and alledge his word and nature, even under his rod.

247. The reason why the world seeth not the happy condition of God's children is,
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 89

because their bodies are subject to the same infirmities with the worst of men; and they are subject to fall into gross sins: therefore worldly men think, are these men happier than we? they see their crosses, but not their crowns; they see their infirmities, but not their graces; they see their miseries, but not their inward joy in the Holy Ghost.

248. To walk by faith is to be active; not to do as we list, it is an acting by a divine rule. Since the fall, we have lost our hold of God; and we must be brought again to God, by the same way we fell from him; we fell by infidelity, but must be brought back by faith, and live upon such grounds as faith affords: we must walk by faith, looking upon God's promise, and his commandments; and not live by opinion, example, nor carnal reason.

249. In our callings, when we think we shall do no good, but all things seem contrary; yet faith says, God hath set me here, I will cast in my net at thy commandment; let us look to God's word, see what he commands, and then by faith cast ourselves upon him, and leave the success to God's wisdom, power and grace.

250. A christian hath sense and experience of God's love, together with his faith:

90 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

it is not a naked faith, or without any relish; and that sense and experience we have is given to strengthen faith for time to come: therefore when we have any sweet feelings, we must not rest in them, instead of Christ and heaven; but always remember, that divine consolations are given, to encourage us in our way, and to raise our hopes of fulness of joy to the heavenly world.

251. There is a double act of faith: first, the direct, whereby I cast myself upon Christ; and there is a reflex act, whereby I know that I am in a state of grace, by the fruits of the Spirit; by the first act we are saved. Feelings (sensible comfort and joy) are often divided from the first act; for God may enable a man to cast himself entirely upon Christ, and yet for some gracious ends he shall not immediately know it, because God will further humble him: God gives the reflex act (which is assured hope) as a reward of exact walking with him; but we must look to the closing act of faith, as that which saves us. We ought to live by this direct act of faith, till we get to heaven; but add to this, that no man walks by lively faith, that wants spiritual comfort.

252. God often defers to help his children, till they are in extremity; because
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 91

he will have them live by faith, and not by sight: as good Jehosaphat, *We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee*: 2 Chron. xx. 12. St. Paul received the sentence of death in himself, that he might trust in God, 2 Cor. i. 9. This is the cause of divine desertions. God leaves his children, and may seem to be their enemy, because he will have us live by faith; and when we live so, we glorify him, and he graciously rewards us, with special tokens of his love.

253. Howsoever things are in our sight, we should give God the honour to trust his promises. Though his dealings towards us seem to be, as to reprobates, yet believe his word, and humbly and earnestly plead, *Lord remember thy promise to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust*, Ps. cxix. 49. Cease not to wrestle with God, for by his Spirit in prayer, he doth often convey secret and suitable strength to his children, that they may be able to prevail with him, and gain all promised blessings.

254. The reason, why many christians at the hour of death, are full of doubts and fears, is this, because in their life time, alas! too carnal, they have not been much exercised, in living by faith in the Redeemer.

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92 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

255. Confidence doth certainly arise from faith, when troubles make it stronger. It is a true evidence of grace, when confidence increaseth with opposition; great troubles exciting greater confidence in Christ. Again, it is a sign a man's confidence is well grounded, when he can carry himself equal in all conditions; having learned both how to want and how to abound. When a man hath an even gracious spirit, to be content in all conditions, it argues a well grounded confidence towards God.

256. None can be truly confident of the divine favour, and a title to heaven, but only God's children. Other men's confidence is like a mad man's strength, who may have that of two or three for a time, but it is false strength. When they are lifted up upon the wings of ambition and favour of men, they boast; but these men in the time of trial soon sink; *The hope of the hypocrite shall perish*, Job viii. 13.

257. Wicked men are at death forced out of the world like malefactors, unwilling to leave their prison; but God's children desire when they die, to depart in obedience to his call, *Lord now let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word*, Luke ii. 29. To be in the body is good, because we live by faith; but it is better to be

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be with the Lord, because then we shall live by sight, and in perfect bliss.

258. An ambitious man undermines all others; if an enemy stands to resist him, he will make his way even through blood. He will also tread upon his friends to get to honour: a soul that is graciously ambitious, considers what stands in his way, and hates father and mother, nay his own life; pulls out the right eye; even cuts off his right hand, and offers violence to every thing that stands betwixt him and his God.

259. We should study the scriptures, to find what is acceptable to God. What doth most please God? It is holiness: and grace and mercy are also his delight; therefore we should study to be holy, and gracious, and merciful. *This is the will of God, saith the apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 3. even your sanctification, that is to be holy as God is holy.* Those that will be acceptable to God, must be good in private, in their closets; because sincerity supposeth that God sees all; and humbled for the risings of sin, because even these are seen by Christ, with grief and hatred.

261. Let no man be discouraged from doing every good action, for so far as any action is good, it shall certainly be rewarded. The scribes and pharisees sought and received

94 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

received honour from men for their reward. The Romans were just in their civil government; and God so blessed them, that their common-wealth flourished for many hundred years. Let people be what they will (if only civil) they shall have a reward suitable to that good they do. As for heaven and happiness with Christ in another world, they care not, yet every man shall have his penny, *Matt. xx. 13.*

262. It is the great art of faith, to apprehend Christ, suitably to our present condition; when fallen into sin, think of the terrors of the law; but when penitent look to him as a Saviour, inviting all to come unto him; and so neither shall Christ be dishonoured, nor our souls be injured.

263. It is much to be desired, there were that love in some men, to teach what they know; and that humility in others, to be instructed in what they know not. God humbles sometimes great persons, to learn of others that are mean; and it is our duty, and will be our comfort, to embrace the truth, whosoever brings it: and often mean persons are the instruments of knowledge and comfort, to many that have greater endowment than themselves; as Aquila and Priscilla instructed Apollos, *Acts xviii. 26.*

264. If Christ seeks us before we sought him,

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 95

him, will he refuse us, when we seek after him? Let no man therefore despair, or even be discouraged; if there be in thee the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of sin; there is much more height, and depth, and length, and breadth of mercy in God. Though you have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again. Jer. iii. 1. *For his thoughts are not as ours; and his mercies are the mercies of a God reconciling the world unto himself.*

265. When under a cloud of temptations, take heed of opposing your comforts: it wrongs Christ's intentions; he would not have us at any time uncomfortable: and besides, whilst we are in such a frame, we are unfit to glorify God. Fear binds the soul, or brings it into a palsy temper; we are not fit to do any thing as we ought, without some love, and some joy. Though at present under a cloud, yet the sun is always the same; we may for a time, want the light of God's gracious countenance, but never the sweet influences of the Holy Ghost.

266. Most men (if they could) would always live here, but whosoever is a partaker of the benefits of Christ's resurrection, his mind doth presently ascend where Jesus reigns. We are always enlarging
our

96 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

our desires, in this state of imperfection, but faith sees a fulness of joy.

267 Many that make a profession, like the hawk, ascend high, and look low; but those that look high, ascend on high, as being risen with Christ: for a christian forgets what is behind, and aspires, ascending higher and higher, till he rises to his place before the throne of God; but, as at Christ's rising there was an earthquake, so such as are risen with him, now find great commotions and conflicts between the flesh and the Spirit.

268. Christ takes special care of all his disciples, even when by reason of guilt they have most cause to be disconsolate. When the heart is upright towards God; it is not to be expressed, what indulgence he shews to such poor sinners: though Peter had denied him, yet in Mark xvi. 7. *Go tell my disciples, and tell Peter:* Christ took great care particularly to assure him of his love, though he had most shamefully denied him.

269. God bears not in vain the name of a Father, he fills it up to the full. It is a name of indulgence, of hope, of provision, a name of protection. It argues the mitigation of punishment; a little is enough for a Father. In all temptations, oh let us, by prayer, fly to the arms of

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 97

our heavenly Father, and expect from him all that a Father should do for his child, as provision, protection, indulgence, yea and seasonable corrections (which are as necessary for us as our daily bread) and when we die we may expect our inheritance, because in Christ he is our Father. But yet we must remember the name of a father is a word of relation; duty is expected from us, we must reverence him as a father, with fear and love; he is a great God, we ought to fear him; he is merciful, yea hath bowels of mercy, we ought to love him: if we tremble before him, we forget that he is loving, and if over bold, we also forget that he is a great and holy God; therefore we should always go to the throne of grace with reverence, holy love, and filial confidence in the name of Jesus.

270. Those that have Christ's peace in their own consciences, will be peaceable towards others. A busy contentious disposition, argues it never felt peace from God; and though men think it commendable to censure the infirmities of others, yet it argues their own weakness; for it is a sign of a good and noble spirit, when we find any thing good, to bear with our brother's weakness. Who was more indulgent than Christ? he bore with the infirmities of his disciples from time to time:

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98 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

oh! let us carry ourselves more lovingly to all, especially towards them that are weak. Nothing should raise us so high in our self-esteem above others, as to forget them to be our brethren; all those infirmities we may see, shall soon be buried, and they ascend to glory.

271. Many shew great respect to persons in eminent stations, and to men of excellent abilities; but there may be a great deal of hypocrisy: therefore the truth of love is tried by this; if we bear a sincere affection to all the saints, even to the meanest of Christ's disciples, Ephes. vi. 18.

272. We must always take heed of coming to God in our own persons or worthiness, but in all things only look to God in Christ. If we would look to God as a Father, we must see him to be Christ's Father first: if we desire to see ourselves acquitted from our sins, let us first look at Christ risen for our justification; if we think of glorification in heaven, let us look up to Christ as glorified; and when we consider of any spiritual blessing, consider it in Christ first. All the promises are made to Christ; he takes them first from God the Father, and gives them to us by his holy Spirit. The first fulness is in God, and he empties himself into Christ;

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And of his fulness we all receive grace, &c.
Col i. 19.

274. God is said to be our God, or to be a God unto us, when he applies, for our good, that all-sufficiency which is in himself. God is our God by covenant, because he hath made over himself unto us in Christ. Every believer hath the title passed over to him; so that God becomes his inheritance. There is more comfort in this, than the heart of man can possibly conceive. It is larger than the desires of his heart; therefore though riches, or honors, or friends, &c. are not ours; yet if able to say, by the spirit of faith, that God is ours, we have all in him; his wisdom, to find out a way to do us good; in danger, his power, to deliver us; under guilt, his mercy, to forgive; and in any want, his all-sufficiency, to supply all our need. If God be ours in Christ, whatsoever God can do, and all things, even whatsoever God hath, shall promote our comfort in time, and happiness throughout eternity.

274. God is the God and Father of all the elect, and particularly a God and Father to every one of them. God is every saint's all-sufficient and everlasting portion. As the sun is wholly every man's, so God loves and cherishes all his children, and

100 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

each of them, even the weakest, as if he had but one.

275. There is a mystery, and depth in the mystery, not only of election and reprobation, but of God's providence. No reason can be given, why some of God's children are quiet, and others are greatly afflicted: why one should be poor and another rich: Psal xcvi. 2. *Clouds and darkness are round about him*: you cannot see him, he is hid in a cloud; but righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne. He may often, in his providence, wrap himself in a thick cloud that none can see him, yet he is just and gracious; therefore when any thing befalls us, for which we can see no reason, yet we must always reverence the Lord, adore his counsels, and submit to him, who is infinitely wiser than we, and always remembers his holy covenant.

276. When we are diligent in business, keep a good conscience, and in all things act as the disciples of Christ, whatsoever befalls us, we may with comfort say, The will of the Lord be done; we are found in God's way; and may then thro' grace expect, a guard of angels around us, and the guardian care and comforts of the Spirit within.

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 101

flesh and spirit lies in this; whether God shall have his will, or we have ours; now God's will is strait, but ours is crooked: if God will have us offer up our Isaac, we must submit, and even readily acquiesce in the whole will of God. The more (through grace) emptied of self, the more free and happy we shall be, by being more fully subject to God: for in what measure we part with any thing for him, we shall receive even in this world an hundred fold in joy and peace, &c.

278. All outward good things we should use in a reverent manner; knowing that our liberty to enjoy them was purchased with the blood of Christ. As David when he thirsted for the waters of Bethlehem, would not drink, because it was as the blood of his three worthies: so though we have a free use of God's creatures, yet must be careful to use them with moderation and reverence, and all to the glory of God.

279. There is nothing of God can please the carnal world, because the best things are represented to the heart of a carnal man, as foolishness. Our corrupt nature above all things would avoid the imputation of folly; and rather than he would be accounted a fool, a natural man will slander the ways of God as foolishness.

202 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

The law of Christ constrains us, and makes us do many things, for which the carnal world think us out of our wits: but let us quiet our hearts, and account it a great favour from God, when the Michals of this world scoff at our goodness: for when they are offended, God through Christ is graciously pleased.

280. To discern your state in grace, chiefly look to your affections, for they are intrinsical, and not subject to hypocrisy. Men of great parts know much, and so doth the devil, but he wants love. In fire all things may be painted but the heat: so all good actions may be done by an hypocrite, but the sacred fire of a divine love, for offering the sacrifice, he hath not. Oh! therefore chiefly examine the truth and sincerity of your affections towards God, whose name is love.

281. We may be blest with large views of the love of God, but can never possibly comprehend it; all the fruits of his love will for ever surpass our finite understandings. The Holy Spirit is graciously given to take away the vail, and to make report of it to our souls: then as soon as the love of Christ is apprehended, it constrains us to all holy duties; not as fire out of a flint, but as water out of a spring. The love of a wife to her husband may begin from

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 103

from the supply of her necessities, but afterwards she may also love his person: so the soul first loves Christ for salvation, but when it is brought to him, and finds what sweetness there is in him, then the soul loves him for himself, and esteems his person, as well as rejoices in his benefits.

282. It should be our continual care to manifest sincerity of heart towards God, in our several callings; and this is done when we look at God in every action, and endeavour to yield our souls entirely to the whole will of God, serve him with all the heart, and perform the work of our callings by his Spirit, according to his word, and promote his glory: if we thus labour to approve ourselves to him, whatsoever be the issue, we shall be indued with holy boldness, and enjoy much inward peace and comfort, having by his grace carried ourselves as in the sight of God, and advanced his glory.

283. That a man may persuade others, he must have a love to their persons, clear knowledge of the cause, and grace to speak in wisdom to their souls. As we are saved by love, we are persuaded by the arguments of love, which is most agreeable to the nature of man; we are led by persuasion, not by compulsion. Men may
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104 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

be compelled to the use of means, but not to faith. Many labour only to unfold the scriptures, for the increase of knowledge, this is a good foundation ; but the special intent of the ministry, is to work upon the heart and affections, and lead the soul to Christ.

284. As we must approve ourselves to God and our own consciences, so to the consciences of others, that they may witness, that we love and deal faithfully with them. Oh, how should we labour to do all the good we can, especially to the souls of men. If we deserve well, they will give evidence for us ; but if we walk scandalously, they will accuse us, that by ill examples we drew them into evil, and hardened them in sin. May it be always our care, to approve ourselves to the consciences of men ; that we may have them to witness for us ; that such of whom we have deserved well, may be our crown at the last day.

285. A man keeps a good conscience towards others, when he makes it appear that he can deny himself to do them good. Conscience will testify, this man certainly regards my good more than his own, he acts so, as that the world may see he is in good earnest ; he speaks well, and makes good his profession by his obedient life.

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 105

May it be our care so to walk ! we shall then approve ourselves to the consciences of all mankind, and to God, thro' Christ Jesus.

286. There are many that receive some divine truths, but they reserve some sin. When Herodias is displeased, John Baptist must lose his head. Some truths make transgressors fret, because their consciences tell them they will not yield obedience ; some sin hath gotten dominion over their affections, but conscience saith, I warn thee against this sin ; then that hatred which should be turned against the sin, is turned upon the word and minister of Christ. Some vermin, when driven to a stand, will fly in a man's face ; so these men, when they see they must yield to conviction, grow malicious, so that what they will not follow, they reproach. How much should it be our care, at all times, to yield obedience to all that we know (of the divine will.)

287. There is a generation of churlish men as even watch for offences ; because they would go to hell with, as it were, some reason, they will not see who are babes in Christ, and who are hypocrites ; and so cast reproach upon all. Therefore sometimes God in judgment towards them may suffer good men to fall, and satan tempts

106 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

tempts them to take scandal at them, to their final ruin.

288. A man may know that the word of God hath wrought upon his conscience, when he comes to it, that through grace, he may hear, learn, and reform. A man with an heart without guile, is glad to hear the sharpest reproofs, because he knows that sin is his greatest enemy. But if we live in any course, we are loath should be reprov'd; it is a sign our hearts are full of guile. Corrupt men mould their teachers to their lusts; but a good man is willing, that divine truths should have their full authority; and he continues, through grace, in the way of duty, though never so contrary to flesh and blood.

289. It is the duty of ministers to prevent objections, that may arise in the minds of the people, and hinder the due reception of gospel doctrine. That divine truths may more readily enter our hearts, we should labour to esteem the person, and his work; for secret surmises are stones of stumbling, which both ministers and people should be careful to prevent or soon to remove.

290. A man ought not to commend himself, but in some special cases; first, because pride and envy in others will not endure

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 107

endure it: secondly, it diminishes God's glory, therefore we should take heed: thirdly, it deprives us of comfort, and hinders the apology of others. The heathen could say, that self-applause is very disagreeable: let us take heed that we do not snatch our right out of God's hand. But on the contrary, in some cases, we may commend ourselves; as when we have a just call to make an apology, in a way of defence, and for the conviction of them that unjustly speak evil of us: and we may speak well of ourselves, in a way of example to others; as parents to their children; this well becomes them; because it is not out of pride or vain glory, for the motive is at once discovered, to be love.

291. It is the duty of all men, but especially of God's children, when they have just occasion, to defend the injured: thus the blind man, *John ix. 30.* defended Christ against the pharisees; and Jonathan spoke to his father in the behalf of David; though called a rebel, he knew that he owed this service unto truth, and to his friend. God hath a cause in the world that must be owned, therefore when religion is brought upon the stage, God seems to say to all, as Jehu did, *Who is on my side, who?* God commends his cause and his

his children to us: *And therefore curse ye Meroz* (said the Angel of the Lord) *curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty: Judg. v. 23.* so a curse lies upon those, that when the truth suffers, have not even a word for its defence.

292. Usually the defamers of others are proud vain-glorious persons; if a man will search for the spirit of the devil in men, let him search for it among vain-glorious teachers, heretics and superstitious persons. The ground of it is from the nearness of two contraries, so the opposition is the strongest; as fire and water when they meet make the strongest opposition. Who so like to God's children, and ministers. as vain-glorious teachers, as making the same christian profession? but Pilate, a heathen, shewed more favour to Christ, than the pharisees. This use we should make of it, not to take offence, when we hear any professor, or even one divine depreciate another; it hath been so, and will be so to the end of the world.

293. All things besides the Lord, are only like grass; when we rejoice therein, and forget God, it is a childish joy, as it were only in flowers; after we have drawn out their sweetness, we cast them away.

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 103

All outward comforts are common to sinners as well as saints ; and, without grace, they will surely prove snares. At the hour of death, what comfort can we have from them, any further than with humility and love to God, and men, we have, through grace, used them well? therefore if we would have our hearts always blest with true joy, oh let us labour to be faithful in our several places, and constantly endeavour, according to our gifts, to glorify God.

294 To glory in any creature whatsoever, is idolatry ; first, because the mind sets up something, which is not God. Secondly, it must be spiritual adultery to cleave to any thing more than to God. Thirdly, it is bearing false-witness, to ascribe excellency where there is none. We have that prohibition ; *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches :* Jer. ix 23. God will not give his glory to another ; therefore when men will misplace that glory, which belongs to God alone, he blasts them, or sets them aside, as broken vessels, and even disdains to use them.

295 A christian's joy is right when it proceeds from right principles, from judgment and conscience, not from fancy and

110 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

imagination ; then there is fellowship between God and him ; for our joy must spring from peace, Rom. v. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* The apostles begin their epistles with mercy, grace and peace ; mercy to forgive, grace to renew our natures, and peace of conscience to yield us joy. These are things, through Christ, to be gloried in ; if we find, by the word, our sins pardoned, our persons accepted, and our natures renewed, we may comfort ourselves in health, in wealth, in wife, in children, in any thing, because all come by Christ from the favour of God. We may joy in afflictions, because there is a blessing in the worst, to prepare us for eternal happiness. Though we cannot joy in affliction itself, as being contrary to nature, yet we may in the issue of it : so that we rejoice aright, when having interest in God, we glory in the testimony of a good conscience ; when looking inward we find all at peace ; when each of us can say upon good grounds, that God in Christ is mine, and therefore both life and death and all things are mine, so far as they may serve my truest good and everlasting felicity.

296. The hearts of men, yea of good men, are apt to idolize outward things. When the disciples through the power of Jesus

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 111

Jesus had cast out devils, they were ready to be proud; but Christ quickly admonished them, *not to rejoice that the devils were subject to them; but that their names were written in heaven*, Luke x. 20. Therefore when we find the least inclination to glory in any thing, we must check ourselves, and consider what grace we have, to use them; what love to men we have, to turn these things to the common good. For whatsoever a man hath, if he hath not also humility, and love to use it aright, it will be unprofitable, nay it will increase his sorrows.

297. It hath been an old false and foolish imputation, to charge distraction upon men of the greatest wisdom and sobriety. John the Baptist was accused to have a devil, Christ to be beside himself; the apostles to be full of new wine, and Paul to be mad. The reason is, as religion is a mystical and spiritual thing, so the tenets of it seem to be paradoxes to carnal men; as first, that a christian is the only freeman, and others are all slaves; the only rich man, though ever so mean in the world; the only beautiful man, though (outwardly) ever so deformed; and the only happy man, in the midst of all his present miseries. These things, though true, seem strange to natural men, and therefore when

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they see men making conscience of sin, they wonder at this commotion for trifles. But these men go on in a course of their own, and make that the measure of all: those below them are profane, and those above them are indiscreet. By foolish fancies and affections, they create excellencies, where there are none, then cry down the pursuit of spiritual things as folly. They have principles of their own, to love themselves, and to love others only for themselves, and to hold on the strongest side, and by no means to expose themselves to danger. But when men begin to be religious for Christ's sake they deny all their own carnal ends; and that makes their course seem madness to the world, therefore they labour to spread an ill opinion of them, as mad men and fools.

298. God's children are neither mad nor fools; it is but a scandal cast upon them by the mad men of the world. They are the only wise men, if it be well considered; first, they make the highest end their aim, which is to be children of God here, and saints in heaven: secondly, they aim to be found wise men at death; therefore are always making their accounts ready: thirdly, they labour to live answerable to the rule of the word. Fourthly, they improve all advantages to advance their grand end; labour

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 113

hour to grow better both by their comforts and crosses, and to make a sanctified use of all occurrences : fifthly they swim against the stream of the times ; though they eat drink, and sleep, as other men, yet (like the stars) they have a secret settled course of their own, which the world cannot discern ; therefore a man must be changed and set in a higher rank, before he can have a sanctified judgment of the ways of God. May he make us truly wise !

299. Those that lay the imputation of folly and madness on God's children, will at last truly be found the greatest fools themselves. First, is not he a fool that cannot make a right choice of things ? how do carnal men make their choice, when they embrace perishing things for the best ? secondly, a carnal man hath not a spiritual capacity to apprehend spiritual things aright ; he cannot see things invisible : thirdly, his heart accounts it a vain thing to serve the Lord : fourthly, he judges his enemies to be his best friends ; and his best friends to be his worst enemies : fifthly, the principles of all his actions are un- sound, because they are not directed to the right object and end, therefore all his affections are mad, as his joy, his love, his delight ; his love is but lust, his anger vexation ; for his confidence he calls God's

114 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

love into question : but a false suggestion from the devil, he soon embraces ; therefore is he not mad ? and this is the condition of all natural men.

300. True freedom is found when by the Spirit the heart is renewed, is enlarged, and becomes subordinate to God in Christ. A man is in a sweet frame when his heart is made subject to God, and drawn out towards him, for the God of all grace sets it at liberty. God will have us make his glory our aim, and then he will bestow grace and glory too upon us. True zeal and holy diligence, are usually attended with the joys of faith and the first fruits of the paradise of God.

301. The love of Christ manifested to me, and my love to Christ quickened by the Spirit, excite an holy admiration in my soul ; it considers what wonderful love is in Christ ; and the Spirit witnesses that this love of Christ is set upon the soul, from hence it begins to argue and admire ; *Lord, wherefore wilt thou shew thyself to me, and not to the world ?* what is the reason thou so lovest me more than others ? The soul with God on the mount, is turned from earthly things, then it sees nothing but love and mercy, and adores. Such grace constrains us to do all things out of pure love to God and good will towards men.

302. When

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 115

302. When Joshua cursed the man that should build the walls of Jericho, he was not in any commotion or revengful fury, but peaceable and devout. When curses come from such an one, he is only a declaratory instrument, in denouncing God's curse. Every man must not dare to take it upon him, for men often curse when they should bless, and such curses like arrows shot upright, fall down upon their own heads. Those that come in the name of the Lord, and are qualified for that purpose, and declare the word of God, their curses or blessings are to be regarded, for they are a means to convey God's curses or his blessings to men, *His word carrying life or death*, 2 Cor. ii. 16.

303. It is over curious to be exact about the time or beginnings of grace; because frequently it falls by degrees like the dew undiscernibly: and there is a great deal of wisdom as well as of power in the work of grace; God offers no violence to the soul, but works sweetly, yet strongly; and strongly, yet sweetly; he goes so far with our nature, that we shall freely delight in grace. So that a man sees the greatest reason, why he should alter his course. God doth not overthrow human nature, the stream of it is graciously changed, the
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116 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

man is the same. The soul is renewed, and body and soul dedicated to the Lord.

304. When we desire only forgiveness of sin, and not grace to lead a new life, that desire is hypocritical. A true christian asks of God power against sin, as much as pardon. If we have not sanctifying, we have not pardoning grace; Christ came as well by water to regenerate, as by blood to justify. Let it be our continual care and endeavour to grow and increase in grace: because, without grace and growth therein, we shall never get to heaven; we cannot withstand our enemies, nor bear any cross; cannot go on comfortably in our course, and cannot do any thing acceptable and pleasing to God.

305. God will be as the dew upon Israel, and he shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, Hof xiv. 5. These are not vain words; we have great need of such promises, especially in a distressed state, for then our spirits sink, and our hearts faint; therefore we have need to have the same promises of comfort often repeated. Prophane persons think, what need of all this? but if ever pierced in conscience for thy sins, thou wilt then be far from finding fault. When God useth all the secrets in the book of nature, and translates them to spiritual things to assure us of his mercy and love, how rich his grace!

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306. God's children become more circumspect by their falls; they learn to stand and walk; like cedars, the more they are blown, the deeper will they be rooted. That which men think is the overthrow of God's children, doth but root them the deeper; so that after all outward storms, and inward declensions, (by Christ's grace out of weakness being made strong in the Lord) this is the issue, *They take root downwards, and also bring forth fruit upwards, for the Lord restoreth their souls, &c.* Pf. xxiii. 3.

307. A christian in his right temper is compared to the best of every thing: if to a lily, the fairest: if to a cedar, the tallest; if to an olive tree, the most fruitful, *And his scent shall be as the wine of Lebanon,* Hof. xiv.

7. We should therefore make use of natural and apply them to spiritual things; if we see a lily, think of God's promise and our duty, we should grow as lilies; when we see a tall tree, think, I must grow higher in grace; and when we see a vine, think, I must grow in fruitfulness; when we go into our fields, orchards or gardens, let the eye raise the thoughts higher, unto consideration of what is required, and of what is promised, in God's holy word.

308. As it is the glory of the olive tree to be fruitful, so it's the glory of a christian to be useful in his calling; and the way
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118 DIVINE MEDITATIONS

to be so, is, to esteem fruitfulness our glory. It is a good sight to see a christian answer his profession, and flourish in his station, to be fruitful and shine in all good works. When ability and opportunity, and an enlightened zealous heart do all meet for doing good; how glorious to behold!

309. When about to enter upon action, let us always ask our souls, is it suitable to my calling, to my hopes? if not, why should I do it? Christ hath made me a king, to rule over my lusts, doth this agree with my dignity? this base act, this base company; shall such a man as I do this? when, through grace a man reasons thus; it will raise Ephraim's resolution; *What have I any more to do with idols?* In walking circumspectly after the Spirit we shall find the cheering warmth of divine comfort, accompanying every action: and with humility and thankfulness, shall acknowledge all the comfort and strength we receive, to be from the refreshing dews of God's grace.

310. In time of calamity, God will preserve his fruitful trees; as in Deut. xx. 19. The Israelites were commanded not to destroy them; so though God's judgments come, yet will he take special care of his obedient children. The judgments of God will fall heavy upon barren trees; though God may long endure barrenness in the
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want of the gospel, yet he will not under its enjoyment. It were better for a bramble to be in the wilderness, than in an orchard; nothing will keep the ax from the root, but fruitfulness in God's vineyard.

311. It may be observed that the aged seem not to grow, at least not to be so zealous as many young christians; but the reason is, because there is in young christians, a greater strength of natural parts and more lively affections, and these make a great appearance; but aged men grow in spiritual strength and are more refined; their knowledge is more clear, their actions more pure, their zeal more seraphical, and not mingled with wild fire; therefore though aged christians be not carried with an high and full stream, yet they become, through grace, more stable and judicious, more heavenly minded, and mortified; they continually grow deeper in humility, by a clearer sight of their own corruptions and daily sins, and rise higher towards heaven on the wings of faith and holy love.

312. In true conversion the soul is changed, to be of the same mind with Christ; as he is affected, so is the soul; and as he loathes all evil, so upon this ground, there is in us a loathing every sin. A carnal man is like a wolf driven from the sheep, that yet

120 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

yet retains his ravenous nature; those that are driven from their sins by the terrors of conscience, are only affrighted with sin's desert, but do not hate it; therefore the loathing and hatred of all evil is required, as well as leaving it by outward reformation. Divine grace reforms, renews and quickens us truly to serve the Lord.

313. It is evident that our conversion is sound, when we truly loathe and hate sin, from the heart; a man may know his hatred of evil to be true, first, if it be universal: he that hates sin truly, hates all sin. Secondly, true hatred is fixed: there is no appealing it, but by abolishing the thing hated. Thirdly, hatred is a more rooted affection than anger; anger may be appeased, but hatred remains and sets itself against the whole kind. Fourthly, if our hatred be true, we hate all evil, in ourselves first, and then in others; he that hates a toad, would hate it most, in his own bosom. Many, like Judah, are severe in censuring others, *Gen. xxxviii. 24.* but partial to themselves. Fifthly, he that hates sin truly, hates the greatest sin, in the greatest measure; he hates all evil in a just proportion. Sixthly, our hatred is right, if we can endure admonition and reproof for sin, and not be enraged; therefore those that swell against reproof,

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proof, do not appear to hate sin; only with this caution, It may be given with such indiscretion and self love, that a man may only hate the reprover's proud manner: therefore, in discovering our hatred of sin in others by reproof, we must consider our calling; it must be done with a sweet temper, preserving due respect to those reprov'd, that it may appear only to be done out of true love and zeal, and not out of anger or pride.

314. All associations that are not begun well, frequently soon end in hatred. Take heed with whom you join in amity; before you plant your affections, consider the persons, what they are; if any signs of grace appear, then it is good; if not, there may be soon a shameful rent. Thro' life this ought to be our rule; we should always endeavour in all companies, either to do, or receive some spiritual good; and where we can neither do, nor receive good, we should avoid such acquaintance. Therefore do good to all, but consider and take heed, not to stand in combination with any wicked or ungodly men.

315. Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution. He must have his nature changed, and carry his hatred against all evil courses; therefore to frame a religion that hath no trouble, is

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only to make an idol. Neuters in religion are like the bats, that can scarce be distinguished from mice, or flying fowl, because they resemble both. Oh! take heed of neutrality in religion. After the first transient heat, many become lukewarm, then they become quite cold. Oh! look to your beginnings, pure affection in religion must continue and should always flame in sacred zeal.

316. Wise men do nothing without proposing some great end; and the more wise, the greater is the end: shall we attribute this to men, and not adore the wisdom of God? Christ certainly would never have appeared in our nature, or suffered death, but with some glorious design. Shall we think this mystery, of God's taking flesh upon him, was for a slight purpose? No, the end of his coming was to save sinners, *1 Tim. i. 15.* He came to bring us to God, *1 Pet. iii. 18.* But he that will save us, must first deliver us out of Satan's bondage; therefore Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, *1 John iii. 8.* It must needs follow, that the salvation of our souls is of vast consequence, as for this great end, Christ both took our nature, and suffered death, the death of the cross.

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 123

317. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil in us, but makes us kings under himself, to fight his battles. As by his Spirit in us, he destroys the works of the devil; so he doth it in the exercise of all our powers of soul and body, by exciting his own graces already given. He hath made us kings unto God, that we should fight, and in fighting overcome, and enter into his glory. The chief grace that God helps us to exercise in overcoming all our enemies, is faith. We fell by infidelity and disobedience; Christ comes, roots up infidelity, and instead thereof he plants faith. Faith unites us to him, and then, by a divine skill, it derives strength in every time of need from Christ, to fight his battles, and triumphs over every enemy.

318. Temptations at first, like Elijah's cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, if not repelled will soon overspread the whole soul. Satan nestles himself, when we dwell upon the thoughts of sin: we cannot prevent the sudden risings of sin, but by grace we may keep them down, and they should not for a moment remain without opposition. Oh let us earnestly endeavour always to be in good company, and run our christian race: as the Holy

224 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

Ghost works by these advantages. Oh may we wisely observe and improve them!

319. It is hard to discern the working of Satan from the motions of our own corruptions, because for the most part he goes secretly along with them. He is like a pirate at sea; who fires upon us, under our own colours: or like Judas to Christ, he comes as a friend, therefore it is hard to discern each of them distinctly: but Satan's attempts, may be partly seen, by the eagerness of our lusts, they are sudden, strong, strange, so strange sometimes that even nature itself abhors them: the blessed Spirit of God leads us sweetly on; but the devil drives a man like a tempest, as we see Amnon for his sister Tamar. Again, if we resist the motions of God's good Spirit, dislike his government, and give way to passion, then the devil enters. Let a man be unadvisedly angry, the devil will make him envious and seek revenge; passions let loose are chariots in which the devil rides. Some by nature are prone to distrust, and some to be too confident; now the devil joins with those corruptions and draws or drives them on to acts of sin. He sits (as it were) upon our corruptions and there hatches all sin, All the devils in hell cannot force us to sin; Satan works by
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 125

suggestions, stirring up humours and fancies, but cannot work upon the will: we betray ourselves by yielding, before he can do us any harm; yet he ripens sin when cherished in the heart, and brings it forth into actual transgression.

320. There are some sins that let Satan loose upon us. As, First, Pride; we see it in Paul, *2 Cor. xii. 7*. Secondly, Conceit and presumption; as we may see in Peter, *Matth. xxvi. 33*. Thirdly, Secularity; which is always the fore-runner of some great punishment, or great sin, (which is a most awful punishment) as we see in David. Fourthly, Idleness; It is the hour of temptation, when a man is out of God's business. Fifthly, Intemperance; either in diet, or otherwise. Therefore Christ commands us to pray and watch, and keep sobriety in using all the creatures. Sixthly, There is a more subtle intemperance of passion. In whatever degree we give way to wrath, revenge, or covetousness, &c. in that degree Satan gains advantage against us. Seventhly, When a man will not believe and submit to truths revealed, though likewise natural truths. God gave up some to vile affections, *Rom. i. 26*. because they would not cherish the light of nature; much more may we fear divine wrath, when we do not cherish the

126 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

light of his grace Oh may God save me from mine iniquities, let every one pray, subdue Satan, and quicken me to every good word and work !

321. Christ wrought our salvation in a state of humiliation : in the way to glory, we must be conformable to our head, and pass through a state of abasement. We are chosen to a portion of afflictions, as well as to grace and glory. God saw it needful, because we cannot easily digest a flourishing condition. We are naturally given to affect outward excellencies ; when trusted with great estates, we are apt to forget God, and our duty to others. Oh ! may we be taught truly and readily, by the Holy Ghost, to justify God, when we are most afflicted in our persons, or frequently abased in the world ; as many as Jesus loves, he rebukes and chastens, *Rev. iii. 19* Oh ! may I be always zealous and repent.

322. Many of the poor, are exceeding proud ; but God sanctifies outward poverty to his children, to promote true poverty of spirit. As they are poor, so they have a mean esteem of themselves ; it makes them inwardly more humble, and more tractable to God's government. When under any cross, let us observe whether we join with God or not ? when he afflicts us outwardly, whether inwardly we be more abased ?

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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 127

when he makes us poor, whether we become also more and more poor in spirit? When God designs to humble us, oh let us labour always, through grace, to abase ourselves, and mortify pride.

323. Poverty of spirit should accompany us all through life, hereby we shall see, that no righteousness or strength of our own, is sufficient for sanctification; that all the grace we need is out of ourselves, in Christ, even for the performance of every holy duty; for though we have grace in the principle and habit, yet we cannot bring it into act without new grace. There is a fitness in trees to be fruitful, but without the influence of heaven they cannot bear fruit. That which often makes us miscarry in our duties, is this, we think we have already strength and wisdom sufficient; then, what is begun in self-confidence ends in shame. We set about duties in our own pride, and strength of parts, and so find no better success. It is always a good sign that God will bless our endeavours, when, out of a deep sense of our own weakness, we by faith in prayers and supplications, like our Lord, *Heb. v. 7.* also water every service, every condition, with (strong crying and) tears. We sow with tears, God gives the increase, and we reap with joy.

324. It is not sufficient for a christian to have

128 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

have habitual grace; the vine cannot bring forth fruit without the fresh influences of heaven, though planted and well rooted in the best soil. Unless God assists us, former strength will not serve, when new duties or temptations come. We must exercise our faith, love, patience, humility; and for this purpose God hath furnished us with the Spirit of all grace. Oh! let us always remember, when we have any temptation to resist, any lust to subdue, and any duty to perform, to pray unto Christ for his Spirit, and to give the increase.

325. God, through Christ, doth not so much look at our infirmities, as at our uprightness and sincerity; and when out of temptation, we should pray and examine what God hath wrought in us. Then, though infirmities and failings appear, yet if our hearts be upright, God for Christ's sake will pardon them; David and others were accounted upright, yet had many imperfections, and had fallen into great sins.

326. Watchfulness is an exercise of all the graces of the Spirit, and these are given to keep our souls awake. We have enemies that never sleep; and our worst enemy is within; and the worse, because so near. We live in a world full of temptations, and wicked men are full of malice:

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lice : we are passing through our enemy's country, and need to be ever vigilant. The devil also watches, to spoil every good action ; therefore we need to pray always, and watch, that all our graces may be in perpetual lively exercise. Oh may we constantly watch with a fear of jealousy, take heed of a spirit of drowsiness, and labour also to keep ourselves unspotted from such a defiling world.

327. It may be asked, How shall we know the scriptures to be the word of God ? Do but grant, there is a God, it will follow that he must be worshipped and obeyed ; and that this service must be discovered to us ; then let it be considered what word of God can be different from this ? Besides, even by the superstition of the Jews (who were very strict to every letter) God hath preserved it for us ; and the heretics, since the primitive church, have so much observed one another, that there can be no other than this word of God. But we must further know, that we must have something in our souls, suitable to the truths contained in it, before we can truly and savingly believe it to be the word of God. As, that we find its power in working upon our hearts and affections : *Did not our hearts burn within us, when he opened to us the scriptures,* Luke xxiv. 32. Again, its
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130 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

divine operations to warm and to pacify the soul ; its power to make a Felix tremble ; and its searching quality, to divide between the marrow and the bone. We do not therefore only believe the scriptures to be the word of God, because any man, or because the church saith so ; but principally, because we find it by experience working the same effects in us, that it speaks of itself. Oh let us never rest, till when we hear a promise, we find something in us by the sanctifying Spirit, that is suitable to it, and so assuring us, that it is this word alone that can inform us of the good pleasure of God to us, and of our duty towards him, for the salvation of our souls.

328. There is in God a fatherly anger, after conversion ; but this is turned away, when in sincerity and repeated acts of faith we humble ourselves before him. One saith well, There is a child of anger, and a child under anger. God's children are not children of wrath, though sometimes under his displeasure ; when they do not carry themselves as sons ; when they venture on sins against conscience, &c. But when they humble themselves, repent and fly to God in Christ for mercy and strength ; they come into favour again, and recover the comfort of such a relation to God.

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329. We may know God loves us, when by his word and Spirit he speaks friendly to our souls, and we by prayer dutifully seek him again : when we have communion with them whom God loves ; to them he discovers his secrets, and by them to us, even such secrets as our souls never knew before. He chiefly reveals these secrets to us, when our hearts are brought to an ingenuous confession of all our sins ; and we have no comfort but from heaven. A father discovers his tenderness most affectionately to his child when sick, so God reserves the brightest discoveries of his love, especially, till such times, as we renounce all carnal confidence. If we can assure our souls of God's love, let us be at a point, as to every thing that happens to us in the world, whether disgrace or death ; because we may fetch patience and content from hence, that God's covenant love will supply all our wants, and save our souls.

330. After a gracious pardon, two things remain, infirmities and weaknesses. Infirmities are corruptions stirred up, which hinder good, and excite us to evil ; but yet they are so far resisted and subdued, as not to break forth into act. Weakness, this appears when we suffer any infirmity to break out into act for want of watchfulness ; as, if a man be subject to an angry

gry temper; when this is working disturbance in the mind, it is infirmity; but when for want of watchfulness it breaks forth into action, it is weakness. These diseases are suffered to attend us, to remind us frequently of the bitter root of sin; for if sin did not sometimes break forth, we should think our nature perfectly cured. Who could have thought that Moses, so meek a man, could have broken out into such passion? we see it also in David, and Peter, and others: and this shews, that the corruptions of nature in them were not perfectly healed. But there is this difference between the falls of God's children, and of other men; when others fall, they settle in the mire; but when God's children fall, they see their weakness, mourn over the bitter root of sin, hate it the more, and are never at rest till it be cast out by the renewed strength of grace and repeated acts of repentance. Therefore let no man be too much cast down by his infirmities, so long as they are resisted; for a due sense of them excites a fresh hatred of all our corruptions. God in anger only looks upon sin unrepented of and unresisted. He hath holy ends in suffering sin to grieve us, to keep us from outward vices, and make us long for heaven.

331. None in sincerity, frequently promote

DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 133

mote holy conference, but are great gainers thereby. Many ask questions, and are inquisitive to know: but not that they might practise. This is a proud desire to taste of the tree of knowledge. But the desire of well-affected christians, is to know more, that they might more diligently seek Christ, and obey his voice. We gain much often by discourse with those which are young in religion. St. Paul desired to meet the Romans (though they were his converts) that he might himself be strengthened and comforted by their mutual faith, *Rom. i. 12.*

332. When once the Spirit fastens the wrath of God upon the consciences of those he means to save, then follow those afflicting affections of grief and shame. Hence come a dislike, an hatred of sin, and a divorce between the soul and its beloved sin. There was before a scepter of sin in the soul; now God begins to dispossess the strong man. Then follow strong desires to be holy, and even desperation, so far as that, if God in Christ be not merciful, the soul saith, what can become of me! As the Spirit lets in some terrors, so he likewise gives us some hopes: as, *What shall I do to be saved?* implying a resignation of the will to take any course for salvation, then all the

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134 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

world, for even one drop of God's mercy in Christ

333. Christ never comes with his comforts, but where he is valued and esteemed, yet he delights not to hide his face from poor penitent sinners; but when we are through grace made fit, truly judge ourselves unworthy of any favour; then he comes and receives us with arms of love. There is comfort for the worst, if they will come in and submit to God's ordinances; they will be effectual to subdue our corruptions, and when once God has taken the heart for his temple, he will bring in to it all his treasures; there will be a mutual fellowship between God and the soul, when we are once subdued by his grace, and account his favour to be our life.

334. God is so powerful, an almighty agent, that he can overcome all opposition. He can easily, by his grace, overthrow the carnal principles of reason which every natural man has predominant in the fort of his soul. He presents to men their condition by nature, and lets in a taste of his vengeance. When God in his ordinances shews greater reasons for goodness, than Satan can for his carnal courses, then all falls down. Those that are not fully subdued, yet let them come to the ordinances;
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS: 135

for they are yet within God's reach in his own way. When the word of God discovers the baseness, vileness, and danger of sin, the soul stops; but let none despair. Though thy heart be stone, yet God can work powerfully; every thing is difficult to infirmity, but it is a divine work to pull down a wicked sinner, to renew the soul, and prepare it for heaven.

335. However diligent we may be in our calling, yet the ability and the blessing can only come from God. We pray for daily bread, and he gives it, though we labour for it. There is a gift of success, and unless it be given us from above, we shall then with the disciples only toil, but catch nothing all the day.

336. Gifts are for grace, and grace for glory. Gifts are peculiar to some men, but grace is common to all true christians. Gifts are peculiar to many, and common to such as are not good. Gifts are found with great sinners: but grace works love and humility, it abases and sanctifies the soul. The devil has lost little of his acuteness, but yet he remains mischievous. Many have great parts, but they may have also a devilish spirit. Grace comes from special love, and shews itself in fruits of love to God and man. Many had rather be reckoned devils than fools; they desire to be accounted

136 DIVINE MEDITATIONS.

men of parts, herein they glory, not in Christ; no, but they reject the riches of his grace.

337. It is a hard matter to find the least measure of grace, and the greatest degree of formality; for as the portrait often exceeds the person, so doth an hypocrite often make a greater shew than the true christian. The lowest exercise of saving grace is in spiritual desires; and these are known to be saving, if they proceed from a taste and inward relish of divine things, and not merely from the object presented in the word. We must distinguish between occasional affections stirred up, and our real general inward frame of soul: for those emotions suddenly raised, do presently sink again. The waters in the hot bath have a natural constant heat, but common water, when it is heated to a far greater degree, will soon return again to its former coldness, and so remain.

338. Though certain of victory over our spiritual enemies, yet we must continue the fight. With the devoted kings of Canaan Israel fought, and all were subdued and slain. Christ our king that fights for us, fights with us, and will crown us too, when he hath given us the final victory. The time will come, soon the day of triumph come, when we shall say of
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DIVINE MEDITATIONS. 137

all our enemies, as Moses said of the Egyptians, *Those enemies that we now see, we shall see no more for ever. Be strong therefore in the Lord, and in the power of his might,* Eph. vi. 10. Even in the blessed prospect of heavenly peace and triumphant joy, Oh thou militant believer! frequently call thy soul to the work of praise. Oh let us praise a faithful God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6 JY 53

THE END.

I N D E X.

A

- Adam, first and second, Medit. No. 69.
 Advice and Reproof, 194, 313.
 Afflictions sanctified, 5, 8, 10, 52, 54, 187,
 189, 198, 200, 218.
 Afflictions prepare for Glory, 52.
 Afflictions, causes of them, 185, 192, 198,
 204, 244, 252, 328.
 Afflictions, divine hand in them, 198, 199,
 202, 321, 322.
 Art of Faith, 262.
 Assurance, 240, 242, 243, 246.

B

- Belief of scripture, 102, 105, 212, 327.
 Blessings and curses, 302.

C

- Carnal men fools, 299.
 Christ's love and care, 4, 41, 61, 64, 65,
 106, 143, 144, 159, 175, 217, 223.
 Christian courage and diligence, 15, 159,
 258, 317, 338.
 Christian hope, 86, 106, 154, 129, 143,
 144, 159, 175, 217, 223.
 Christian a minor, 100, 126, 167, 221.
 Christian company, 118, 194, 214, 237,
 263.

I N D E X.

- Christian life and service, 179, 182, 195,
 211, 260, 309.
 Christian conference, 214, 331.
 Christian, a general blessing, 226, 307.
 Christian confidence, 255, 256, 276.
 Christian, old and young, 74, 98, 100,
 223, 311, 331.
 Christian liberty, 300.
 Christian, wise, 297, 298.
 Church, true, 170.
 Coming to God, 272.
 Communion with God, 20, 144.
 Confession of truth, 109, 112.
 Conformity to Christ, 65, 75, 76, 77, 78,
 79, 127, 219, 317.
 Contemplation of glory, 87, 88.
 Contentment, 149, 175, 176, 177, 200,
 215, 219, 227, 238.
 Conviction, 155, 156, 186, 229, 230, 332,
 334.
 Covenant interest in God, 14, 18, 216.
 Creature comforts, 294, 296.
 D
 Death, 254, 257.
 Defamation, 279, 292, 297.
 Degrees of grace, 140, 202.
 Deliberate sins, 93, 201.
 Desertion, divine, 13, 108, 213, 216, 246,
 252.
 Devotedness to God's will, 2, 19, 85, 211,
 277, 278, 282.
 Diligence and love, 301.

I N D E X.

Diligence and prayer, 174, 178, 191, 216,
235.

Doubts removed, 97, 145, 179, 233, 255.

Duty of sinners, 23, 104, 116.

Duty, spiritual, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 64,
134, 135, 180, 181.

Duty and comfort, 142, 150, 166, 179,
195, 216, 235, 240, 243.

Duty and the Spirit, 236.

Duty of ministers, 283, 284, 286, 389.

E

Enmity to the gospel, 161, 192, 286.

Exercise of grace by the Spirit, 225, 236,
323, 324.

F

Faith under trouble, 11, 12, 30, 40, 41,
175, 203, 218, 222.

Faith and peace, 50, 122, 246, 250, 253,
254, 255.

Faith and sight, 63, 85, 253, 257.

Faith and patience, 98, 100, 106, 122,
123, 124, 130, 176, 238.

Faith, walking by it, 248, 249, 250, 254.

Faith, direct and reflex, 251.

Falls improved, 68, 73, 90, 262, 306, 330.

G

Gifts and grace, 94, 263, 336.

God's glory our end, 7, 21, 48, 293, 294.

God's mercy infinite, 130, 131, 159, 160,
234, 264, 333.

God our portion, 162, 273, 277.

God a father, 269, 274, 328, 329.

I N D E X.

- Golly and wicked, 247, 248, 286, 313.
 Good examples, 79, 220.
 Good conscience, 205, 270, 325.
 Good works, 261, 281, 284, 285, 308,
 309.
 Gospel invitation, 104, 333.
 Grace, fitness for, 45, 113, 114, 134.
 Grace and sin, 46, 59, 68, 70, 76, 77,
 90, 91, 92, 107.
 Grace, evidence of, 71, 137, 139, 169,
 206, 233, 255, 280.
 Grace, growth in, 72, 119, 132, 138,
 240, 305, 307, 311.
 Grace, means of, 113, 114, 116, 128,
 135, 192, 196.
 Grace and nature, 123, 134, 147, 148,
 241, 266, 267, 279, 330.
 Grace, sovereign, 334, 335.
 Grace and hypocrisy, 337.
 Grief and joy, 31, 33, 184.

H

- Happiness, 172, 177, 266, 267, 273, 294,
 295.
 Health abused, 188.
 Holy desires, 25, 26, 27, 34, 74, 169, 280,
 304, 337.
 Holy walking, 43, 99, 108, 136, 178, 193,
 210, 211, 215.
 Holy Spirit's work, 56, 58, 80, 99, 133,
 145, 216, 231, 303, 318.
 Holy Spirit a comforter, 145, 150, 151,
 265.

I N D E X.

Holy fear, 210, 269, 326.

Humility and love, 125, 127, 132, 175,
194, 226, 270, 271.

K

Knowledge, saving, 42, 81, 82, 84, 141.

Knowledge, speculative, 83, 85, 146, 147,
148.

L

Love to ordinances, 1, 23, 57, 142, 214,
216, 260, 334.

Love of God, 24, 115, 143, 173, 184, 227,
281, 310.

Love to God, 84, 94, 95, 96, 281, 282.

Love, objects of, different, 173, 241.

M

Meditation, 307.

Melancholy, 245.

Mercy, preventing and future, 129.

Mortification to the world, 32, 47, 53, 67,
70, 86, 100, 121, 162, 197.

O

Offences, 288.

Obedience, partial, 206.

P

Passions and reason, 16, 194.

Pleasure of religion, 3, 126, 171, 193,
195, 214, 265, 273, 295.

Prayer, 28, 29, 163, 164, 165, 167, 174,
209, 253.

Precept and example, 220.

Pride, 296.

Poverty, 322.

I N D E X.

Poverty of spirit, 323.

Providence, 275, 322.

Prosperity, sanctified, 6, 9, 38, 39, 88,
215, 227, 278.

R

Reproof, 313.

S

Salvation, 228, 303, 316.

Saving application of truth, 231, 232.

Scripture, 120, 146, 171, 212, 224, 259,
283, 288.

Scripture and experience, 212, 224, 327.

Self-murder, 238.

Self-denial, 111, 125, 149, 204, 215, 226,
239, 258.

Self-commendation, 290.

Self-examination, 325.

Self-examination and repentance, 191, 262,
325, 330.

Sickness improved, 187.

Sin, loathing and leaving it, 312, 313.

Sinful thoughts, 49.

Spiritual judgments, 190, 191, 192.

Spiritual and heavenly life, 53, 55, 57, 137,
139, 223, 225.

Success in our affairs, 35, 249

T

Temptation, 207, 208, 237, 264, 265,
268, 309, 319.

Temptation in trouble, 40, 67, 149.

Temptation conquered, 66, 67, 110, 194,
208, 338.

I N D E X.

Tempter and finner, 153, 157, 320.

Time precious, 196.

Thankfulness under troubles, 17, 126, 143,
145, 175, 198, 200, 217, 227.

Trouble and conscience, 153, 185.

Trouble equal to inordinate love, 204, 296.

U

Unbelief and conscience, 154, 158, 186.

V

Variety of conditions, 175, 176, 219, 220,
238, 244, 247, 321.

W

Want of watchfulness, 108, 191, 192, 243,
326.

Warfare accomplished, 338.

Wicked help the righteous, 203.

Word, profit by it, 101, 103, 105, 117, 146.

Worldly-mindedness, 44, 149, 150, 175.

Works, their insufficiency, 51, 134, 192, 260.

Working of corruptions, 92, 107, 138, 259,
227, 330.

Z

Zeal, 315.

Zeal for God and love to men, 22, 62, 65,
78, 112, 263, 291.